

# PLAYBOY

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010

ENT FOR MEN

## EXCLUSIVE!

### 20 QUESTIONS

*Peque Gallaga Speaks His Mind on  
Sex, Censorship and Celluloid*

### INTERVIEW

*James Cameron on Avatar  
and Being the King of the World*

### REEL REVOLUTION

*The Saga of Filipino Film*

### MONDOMANILA

*This Movie Will Destroy You*

*a tribute to*

# PHILIPPINE CINEMA

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**F**or the true connoisseur, PLAYBOY Philippines is proud to present our readers with the opportunity to own a piece of history.

The series continues with Volume Two! Picking up where Volume One left off, the latest in our hardbound compilation series contains every Playmate, joke, article and Centerfold from January to June 2009.

Whether you're completing your collection or discovering these issues for the first time, these exquisite hardbound volumes deserve a place on any discerning gentleman's shelf.

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**HANK PALENZUELA** is currently a bartender, writer, pirate and sometime 'school of rock' teacher. He has also played bass guitar for Color It Red, Love Bigots Love, Elektrikoolaid and Agaw Agimat, and acted as consultant for various clubs and bars. You can catch him in Urbandub's video for their new song, "Gravity." His view on working behind bars and on mankind in general was summed up by Jack Sparrow in *At World's End*: "I have no sympathy for any of you feculent maggots and no more patience to pretend otherwise. Gentlemen, I wash my hands of this weirdness."



The whimsical and quirky geek that is **CAROLINE DY** has an impressive portfolio as a professional artist and amateur photographer, on top of her being an active presence in the Philippine game design industry. She is currently employed by international casual games company Boomzap Entertainment, and loves cats with the same passion that she has for traveling and gaming.



**CHESKA RAMOS** is many things: a production designer, a stylist and a consummate videoke singer, among others. This 21-year-old student from the UP Film Institute lived in Baguio for a couple of years, and would like to return there in her twilight years. She is interested in thrift shopping and experimental cinema, and would probably make films for the rest of her life if given the chance. She would also like to be a panda who eats cheese all day.



**JOCELYN "JOEY" HERRERA** is a copywriter for a design agency and tiptoes around to work on a variety of freelance writing gigs for overseas and local clients. She is constantly surprised to remember data and factoids from her 5 ½ years as a Film undergrad at the UP Film Institute. Unsure if she is prematurely aged or cursed with the emotional (in)stability of a child, her interests include: crochet, food, comics, music, books, clicking random links on Wikipedia articles, movies and *Glee*.



**ED LEJANO** is a NETPAC juror at various international film festivals as well as a contributor for Screen International. He currently heads the University of the Philippines' Film Institute, and has three feature films to his credit as a director. His article in this issue of PLAYBOY is based on a piece he wrote for the 2009 Thessaloniki International Film Festival catalogue.



**ANA SANTOS** is a freelance journalist based in Manila. A vagina warrior (a more creative way of saying women's rights activist), she writes about a wide range of topics that include safe sex and relationships, women's issues, reproductive health rights, and HIV/AIDS. As a foreign correspondent for international media agencies, Ana also writes about women and children suffering in the midst of armed conflict and internal violence in Mindanao. Her work on this topic, among many others, may be viewed in her online portfolio: [www.anasantoswrites.com](http://www.anasantoswrites.com)



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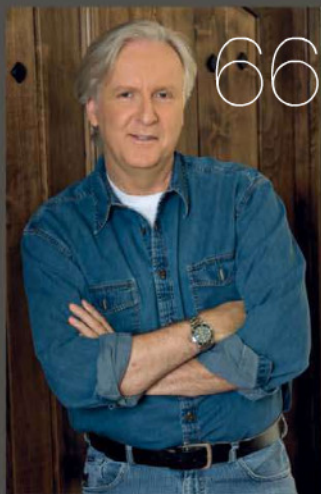


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# PLAYBOY

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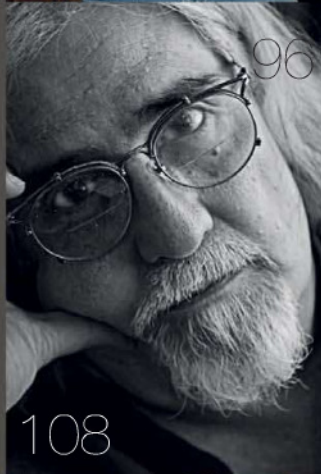
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Photography by Renzo Sen of The Playground Studios



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Photography by Joser Dumbrique



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# PLAYBOY CASTING CALL

We want you! PLAYBOY is looking for the most beautiful women to grace our pages.  
Attend our Casting Calls and see if you have what it takes to become part of the PLAYBOY family!



Drop by our office at 2502-C West Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange Centre, Ortigas Center, Pasig City!  
Casting Calls are held every Friday, from 1PM onwards. Bring your set cards!  
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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# READY FOR OUR CLOSE-UP

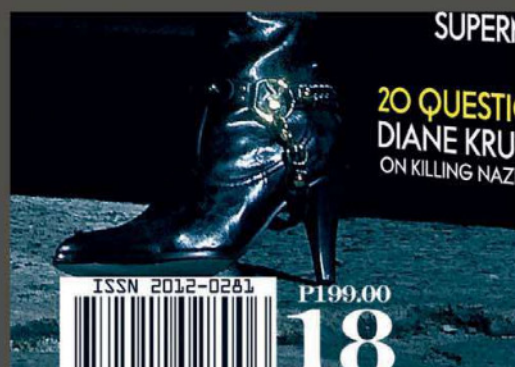
Unconventional as the idea of a male model on the cover of PLAYBOY may be to some, it's not something unheard of, as Peque Gallaga joins the ranks of Burt Reynolds, Steve Martin, Peter Sellers and, more recently, Seth Rogen, as one of the select few chosen to front their favorite men's magazine. PLAYBOY had the honor of spending time with Gallaga at his home in Bacolod for this month's 20 Questions, where Photo Editor Joser Dumbrique shot this month's cover. Shortly thereafter, the interviewers and interviewee got a bit more inebriated than originally intended.

At the time this issue went to press, the Philippines' entry for Oscar consideration, *Ded Na Si Lolo*, had just been announced, and Brillante Mendoza's *Lola* had just won the prize for Best Feature Film at the 6th Dubai Film Fest. These are merely some of many recent signs that the local film industry—despite appearances and criticisms to the contrary—is alive and well, capable of producing thought-provoking stories and audience-pleasing entertainment in rapidly equalizing measure. In this issue, the centerpiece of our tribute to Philippine cinema is a pictorial that pays homage to many of the country's most famous filmmakers and their films. On the features side, UP Film Institute Director Ed Lejano takes us on a tour of the most important independent films produced in the past three years while contributor Joey Herrera explores the Philippines' storied cinematic history.

As the lights go down on 2009 and the curtain goes up on 2010, it was the editorial team's wish to start the year right. With this issue, we believe we've succeeded. What happens from here is anybody's guess. After all, we put Peque Gallaga on the cover. Who knows what we'll do next?

*Ak. Ferrer*

## BUNNY HUNT



The Rabbit Head takes to the streets with Akemi! Cheers to the eagle-eyed readers who managed to locate him in the October/November cover:

Manuel Paterno  
James Tan  
Alice Manalulu  
Diego Zapanta  
Martin Bognot

Hunters! Send your guesses, as well as complete (snail) mailing address to [bunnyhunt@pbphil.com](mailto:bunnyhunt@pbphil.com), and we'll see you next month!



## LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear Playboy,

Years ago, a friend borrowed one of my prized possessions, an Australian Playboy featuring Cindy Crawford, and never returned it to me. What I want to ask is: "Hey, Dante [Gagelonia]! When are you giving me back my Playboy?"

Cheers!

Geoffrey Javier, Quezon City

*Hey, I remember you! Long time no see! Yeah, I've got to dig up that issue. I'm sure I have it around here somewhere. - Dante*

Dear PLAYBOY,

I'm writing with regards to the December issue. The Jacq Yu pictorial was awesome, props to you guys for coming up with such a sizzling pictorial. I do, however, have a bone to pick with the coffee article that you ran. It feels a tad too personal. The title shouldn't have been "Coffee 101" if you were only going to write about your personal experience regarding coffee. Benicio Del Toro seems like a cool guy, I really liked his interview in this month's issue. Overall, you guys did a great job. Please keep up the good work!

Jonard Quejada, Muntinlupa

*Thanks for the constructive criticism. It's always nice to know that our fans are willing to give us feedback for the things we do.*

Dear PLAYBOY,

The forum that appeared in the December issue was scathing, to say the least. Aren't you guys afraid of getting shot?!

John Facundo, Alabang

*Let's just say that working for a men's magazine doesn't stand in the way of our journalistic integrity. Thanks for writing in!*

Dear PLAYBOY,

I must say, December was the best issue yet to come off the presses. The piece with the old-school rock jocks has the potential to be an instant classic. It feels good that there are writings such as these that keep us fans in the loop, and it was also interesting to know that although these rock jocks of old listen to music that predate today's stream of mindless pop, they are not afraid to utilize the technology that is at their disposal. One request I'd also like to ask, please put Phen Madrigal as your cover girl next time. That girl is beyond spectacular! See you next year!

Kiel Cunanan, Pasig

*We're happy to know that our readers can see the progress we've been making. It almost makes the late nights and tight deadlines all seem worthwhile.*

Dear PLAYBOY,

I had just sent an email to FHM Philippines regarding an online ad I had previously replied to regarding a model job ad on OLX.com & there's also one on MODEL MAYHEM (casting). These so-called agents for your companies lure models to send their resumes & portfolios along with very specific requirements. If I could only retract my email with all my vital information, I would, along with my photographs. FHM plans to do something about it. I've already spread the word to fellow photographers & model friends on Facebook regarding this incident of false advertising.

These are the names that appeared on the email: JOJO RACAL (whose email information appeared on the OLX.com advertisement) and JM FELIX MARI -with cellphone number 0905-428-1135

They use FHM & Playboy to advertise. I even have the emails.

Thank you for your time regarding this matter.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Jane Humady

*With the proliferation of online model recruitment, it was only a matter of time before the scams started. Thanks for letting us know, Sarah. We'll definitely have our people look into it.*



#### Credit Where It's Due

The lingerie of our memorable Misses October and December, Betina Acosta and Phen Madrigal, were provided by Velvet Rose and styled by KC Leyco and Hannah Reyes (for KC Leyco).





# PLAYLIST

MUSIC ■ MOVIES ■ TECH ■ BOOKS ■ LIFESTYLE

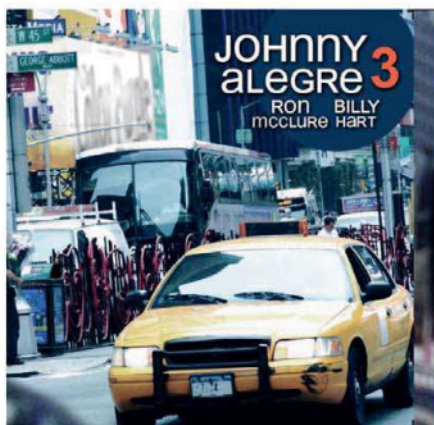
**It's a wild world out there, and we'll never be able to see or hear it all. All we can do is aim for the best, and PLAYBOY is here to help you with that. Let the PLAYLIST show you what's worth coming across as the year turns!**





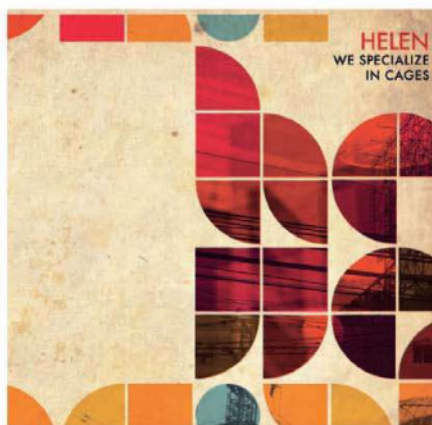
Love can really suck sometimes.  
See our vampire feature on page 124.





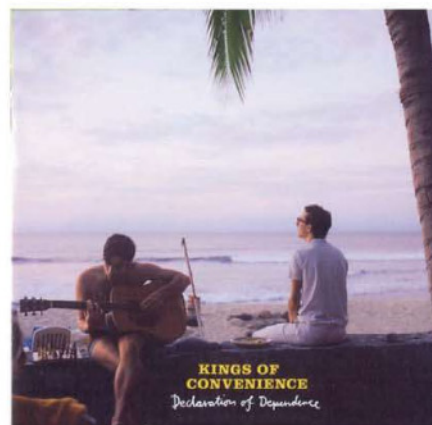
## JOHNNY ALEGRE 3

God bless Johnny Alegre. He is an engaging (and often complex) storyteller that wields not a mouth of insufferable gobbledygook but tones and rhythms out of a hollow-body guitar. He is also a painter, or an interior decorator, if you may. With his music piping in your otherwise prosaic living room, you hear color and see melodies in a classy and non-intrusive display of mastery. In other words, if Alegre's jazz were your décor motif, your humble abode won't look like a Jackson Pollock counterfeit, but neither will it look like a hospital corridor. And really, with mates like bassist Ron McClure and drummer Billy Hart in tow, you have top-shelf raw materials to work with. It's like subconsciously taking along characters as disparate as John Scofield, Stan Getz, and Otis Redding into the fray. 3, Alegre's third (and his first via MCA/Universal), is a brave new record from a tried-and-tested jazz maestro. Perhaps the push-and-pull tugging of "Conundrum," the middle child in Alegre's new batch of babies (musical, not human) encapsulates the modern jazz ethic of Alegre: there are hints of the outside world creeping in, there is resistance, and there is triumph of will against, well, "impurity." But, from time to time, there are adulterous larcenies, music being organic and all. But this is precisely the kind of babble that prevents people like you and me from touching jazz with a ten-foot pole. So, be sorry you read this, and go buy Johnny's new record.



## HELEN WE SPECIALIZE IN CAGES

Taking various levels of undress as a metaphor, Helen's debut would be like good erotica, as opposed to the outright pornography of most current music. It is a disc-long interlude to love-making. It is the tease of the night: the noncommittal glance thrown your way, the innocent brush of skin against skin when your date gets up to go to the loo and you slide her chair away. There are subtle records and there are masterful records, and Helen's new record has the potential to be both. Jill de la Torre's voice, not quite the everywoman's, is both familiar and threateningly alien (always a good thing). Wiggie Bug-os's fretwork teeters on the dissonant but is always rewardingly bright in the end: a similar tango of old and new. Helen's real strength, however, lies in the rhythm section: bassist Jon Jose and drummer Mikah Azurin (and they also take turns penning the material). "Pulsating" is a word that comes to mind, and not for nothing. In tracks like "Farcaster" and "No to True Love," it becomes clear that Jose and Azurin can take verse-chorus-verses-bridge-solo-outro and give it a fresh beating. If *We Specialize in Cages* sounds like a great interlude, I can only envision an even more maddening night, so to speak, in their next record.



## KINGS OF CONVENIENCE DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCE

The guys from Kings of Convenience—Eirik Glambek Bøe and Erlend Øye—are plotting their own extinction with the release of *Declaration of Dependence*, which indirectly declares their overdependence on the Simon and Garfunkel way of doing things. My big bone to pick here is that even the famed duo this duo has modeled themselves after had to break free from the shackles of their brand of folk-pop in the end, coming up with more beat-oriented stuff like "Me and Julio Down by the Schoolyard" and the drinking jingle "Cecilia," among other things. More frustrating is the promise shown on 2001's *Versus*, which features remixes of stuff from their debut *Quiet Is the New Loud*, and the sonic possibilities sparked by Øye's work with The Whitest Boy Alive. Okay, I guess Paul Simon occasionally held out on some crazy stuff and didn't split the world-beater limelight with Art Garfunkel all the time. It is perhaps high time for a change in tempo for KoC (though, really, the start-and-stop dirge that is "My Ship isn't Pretty" ups the "slow" ante further, and the dance-hall strings in "Peacetime Resistance" is something to hold on to). I'm not about to jump ship on a band I was once crazy over, but impatience can be a bitch.



## SONDRE LERCHE HEARTBEAT RADIO

I will get this out of the way now: Sondre Lerche's *Heartbeat Radio* will give you some serious Norwegian wood. Okay, now I feel better. That being said, the new album by the Norwegian tunesmith will probably give you wood (yes, I still meant that as a figure of speech), may you be Norwegian or otherwise. Coming off from *Phantom Punch*, which was like grunge for people who can actually detect melody, *Heartbeat Radio* is Lerche at his singer-songwriter best. While backing band Faces Down has given him some jam-oriented contrast and ballast—and to great results; I'm not saying anything—Lerche fans will appreciate this new back-to-form collection. Maybe scoring that Steve Carell film (*Dan in Real Life*) made him appreciate his sing-song roots once more. At best, *Heartbeat Radio* is Lerche's "Ars Poetica," his mission statement, especially as he talks shop in the title track ("Heartbeat Radio") and the volatile Burt-and-Loni relationship that is "Words and Music." In the former, he complains, "The radio's perfect pitch makes me nauseous./Oh, the dimwits are digging a ditch on my heartbeat radio," while in the latter, he compares a hypothetical relationship to varying musical genres, "When we fight, it's rock 'n' roll./When we make it up, it's soul." Isn't that pretty? Yes, but it's much, much more.

Music reviews by Aldus Santos





## LEGION

As far as concepts for blockbusters go, you can't get much higher than God losing faith in humanity and declaring war on mankind. Paul Bettany stars as the archangel Michael (perhaps as penance for his role in 2007's *The Da Vinci Code*), who appears to a group of small-town dwellers that includes a non-believing Dennis Quaid (perhaps as penance for his role in last summer's *GI Joe*), in a last-ditch attempt to prevent the apocalypse. Mankind's only hope is a young waitress whose pregnancy may literally hold the key to salvation. As stated by visual-effects-guru-turned-director Scott Stewart, "*Legion* is a mixture of *Terminator* and *Exorcist*," but with "angels with machine guns." Now there's one we never heard in Sunday school.



## SHERLOCK HOLMES

For a character with over a hundred screen portrayals and counting, the latest incarnation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's most famous character looks to be the one that breaks the mold. With Robert Downey Jr. in the titular role and the inimitable Guy Ritchie directing, you can forget the classic image of a contemplative, middle-aged man in a deer hunter's cap armed with magnifying glass and pipe; this generation's Holmes is as adept at the pugilistic arts as he is with his chemistry set, offering a side of the super sleuth rarely seen, yet surprisingly in tune with his characterization in the original short stories and novels. Rounding off the cast are Jude Law as Holmes' long-suffering partner and biographer, John Watson, and Rachel McAdams playing Irene Adler, Holmes' love interest and foil, a character infamous for being the only person ever to outsmart the famed gumshoe.



## INVICTUS

His iconic status as a leading man notwithstanding, few directors have grown as much as Clint Eastwood in their capability and willingness to tackle different topics on film. From the post-modern western (*Unforgiven*) to race relations (*Gran Torino*) to police corruption (*Changeling*), the man has displayed an impressive knack for choosing deliberate, thoughtful projects. In *Invictus*, Eastwood's *Million Dollar Baby* co-star Morgan Freeman plays President Nelson Mandela following his release from prison and subsequent election as President of South Africa after the fall of Apartheid. Realizing that the wounds of Apartheid are still very much apparent in his country, Mandela uses the 1995 rugby World Cup as a means to bring his people together behind a common goal (no pun intended). Matt Damon perfected a South African accent for his role as national team captain François Pienaar. Some people have noted that Freeman's casting as Mandela was a no-brainer, but even they have to agree that when it comes to wise black men, nobody does it better.



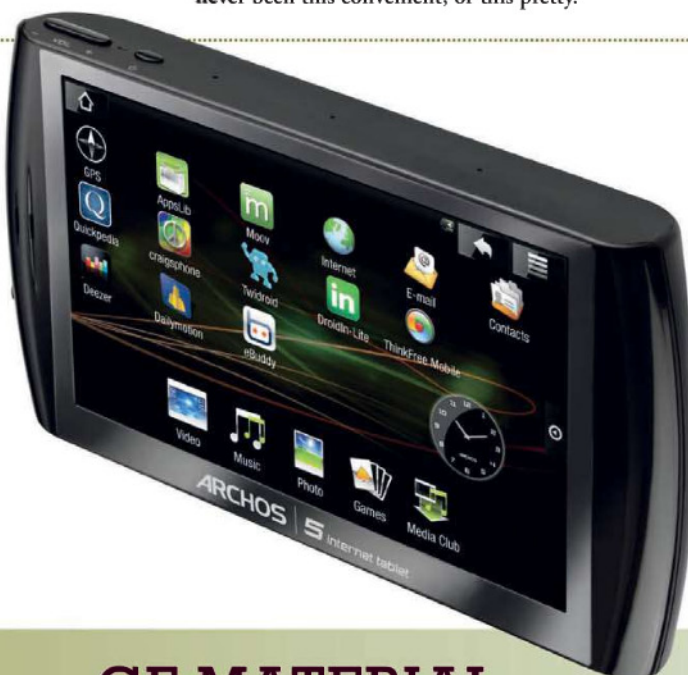


## LIGHT READING

If Amazon.com's Kindle portable reader didn't do much to fire up your interest, maybe Barnes & Noble can give you something else to cozy up to: its own portable e-book reader, the *nook*. This marvel of digital engineering makes use of groundbreaking E Ink® for its display surface, allowing for crisp, clear and very readable text at variable sizes, under any lighting conditions. The touch screen is a welcome testament to how prevalent direct contact interfaces do work, and brings us a step closer to the ultra-thin displays carried around in sci-fi franchises like *Star Trek* (or *CSI: NY*, for that matter). Carrying an entire library with you has never been this convenient, or this pretty.

## A HANDHELD WORLD

With the information age thoroughly upon us, connectivity anywhere and everywhere has moved from being a luxury to a necessity, alongside the ability to manage and display all forms of media content. For people who want to surf the Internet and deal in their digital media without having to lug around a full notebook or netbook, the ARCHOS 5 Internet Tablet is a convergence dream. Powered by the open-ended Android operating system and set up for both Wi-Fi and 3.5G-equipped mobile phones, it is a haven for third-party market software. It is readily equipped to handle a vast majority of existing media formats, including digital TV and HD up to 720p. As a full-featured entertainment center, you'd be hard-pressed to find a system that's as friendly and convenient all around as this handheld wonder.



## GF MATERIAL

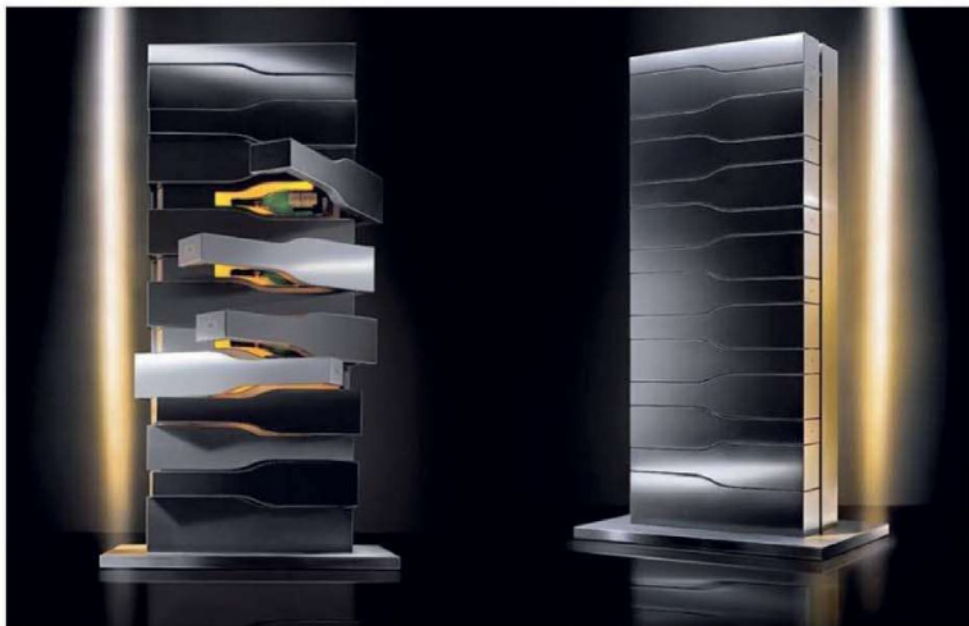
Digital cameras have run the gamut of sizes, from ultracompacts smaller than a cellular phone to massive rigs worthy of a military-grade classification. With DSLRs hitting their industry prime, the next big step was to find a way to make the most of the lenses of yore without needing the traditional bulk of classic models. The Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF1 is one of the latest entrants into a burgeoning field of midsize cameras that allow for the attachment of advanced and special-purpose lenses. Equipped with a 12.1-megapixel sensor, this Micro Four Thirds unit has all the power of a mainline DSLR, and the means to use the lenses thereof. Its basic footprint is small enough for it to be pocketable as well, although its lightweight construction may make it forward-heavy when a sizable lens is attached. The classic compact camera look is back, but with a serious technological paradigm shift on the inside.





## NOT YOUR REGULAR ICE BOX

Where most people would be happy with an ice bucket, French champagne maker Veuve Clicquot employed the services of the Porsche Design Studio to create this stainless steel cooler that would look equally at home on a spaceship as it would in James Bond's apartment. Featuring 12 individually-lit compartments to keep your champagne chilled at a constant 12°C (54°F), the stainless steel cooler stands 6' 6" tall and is available as part of a limited release of 15 units. Included with the purchase price are 12 Veuve Clicquot magnums of classic vintage, starting with 1955 and ending with 1995. This stylish piece of decadence can be yours for US\$70,000.



## RENAISSANCE MAN

The latest version of Chopard's series of tourbillon-based watches, the SL further distinguishes itself from other manually-wound timepieces with its lightweight construction. Indeed, with its titanium case, crown and buckle, aluminium tourbillion cage and sapphire dial & bridges, the timepiece more than lives up to its 'Super Light' moniker. With the L.U.C. Tourbillon SL, Chopard is displaying a thoroughly more contemporary approach than we are used to from the Swiss manufacturer. Turning the watch over reveals a sapphire crystal backing that gives a glimpse into the timepiece's inner workings, aside from the glimpse of the tourbillion through the watch face. Utilizing Chopard's proprietary L.U.C. Quattro technology, the Tourbillon SL can last up to 216 hours fully wound. Combining old-world elegance with modern aesthetics, the L.U.C. Tourbillon SL is a handsome addition to any self-respecting gentleman's wardrobe.

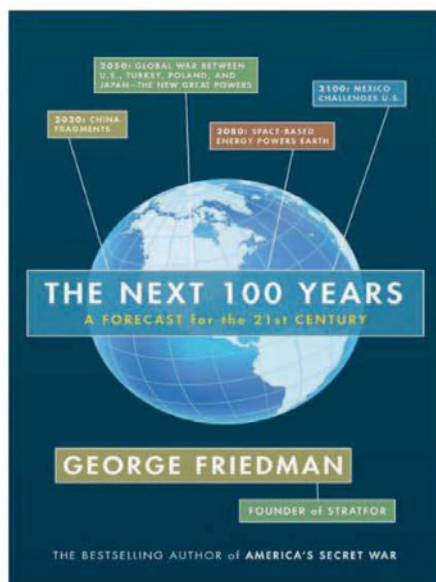


## HOT THREADS

The need for style never goes out of style, so to speak, and this is not lost on the talented designers of the GAS clothing line. Owned and operated by the Grotto family, this premium Italian apparel brand has been around since the 1970s. The brand has spread worldwide, with a sales presence in over 50 countries, including the Philippines. This jacket is one of the latest creations from the GAS line, drawing inspiration from the stylish, upper-class sophistication represented by 1970s tennis superstar Bjorn Borg. It is part of the extended menswear line put together by GAS, with a cut and fabrics that tread the fine line between comfort and panache. Fashionistas may maintain that the most stylish apparel and accessories are never comfortable, but GAS clothing is as appealing to be seen in as it is to wear. Men and women alike can benefit from the brand's attention to trends.



# PLAYLIST BOOKS



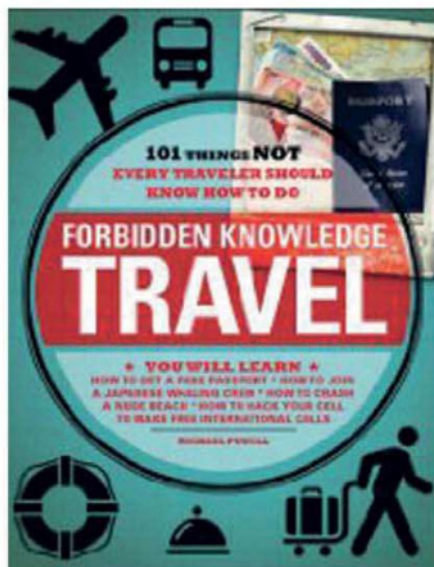
Say the phrase “foretelling the future” and you usually think of Nostradamus and Revelations, among hundreds of other apocryphal works by obscure authors across the centuries, if not outright doomsday. In sharp contrast, Dr. George Friedman’s *The Next 100 Years: A Forecast for the 21st Century* is a refreshing read.

Friedman foretells a little less gloom and doom, and he doesn’t write in verse or use undecipherable code or imagery. A professor of political science for nearly twenty years, Friedman is the author of many books on warfare, intelligence, and political analysis. He is also the founder, CEO and chief intelligence officer of Strategic Forecasting, or STRATFOR. If you check out STRATFOR’s website, you’ll see that they call themselves “the world’s leading online publisher of geopolitical intelligence.” The company offers three types of intelligence products: situational awareness, analyses, and forecasts. Friedman offers all three in his book. In *The Next 100 Years*, a buzzword you’ll see often is geopolitics (go ahead, you know you want to Google it), and it makes sense that people would pay STRATFOR millions of dollars for their information and forecasts. In one chapter, Friedman talks about the nineteenth century in twenty-year intervals, and briefly compares what people were forecasting then with what actually happened. This lays the groundwork for the meat of the book, which you need to read, because a good chunk of it will flabbergast you.

For instance, Friedman proposes that the United States will become even more powerful than you can ever imagine, taking control of commerce and travel even in space, and dictating the results of conflict in various regions across the world. Such a speculation is not very difficult to believe, especially when the book illustrates how the US became a formidable world power after World War II. And then there’s the 2050 World War scenario, which reads like the 2003 *Battlestar Galactica* mini-series. Friedman even uses the term “Battle Star” to describe the US spacecraft orbiting the earth,

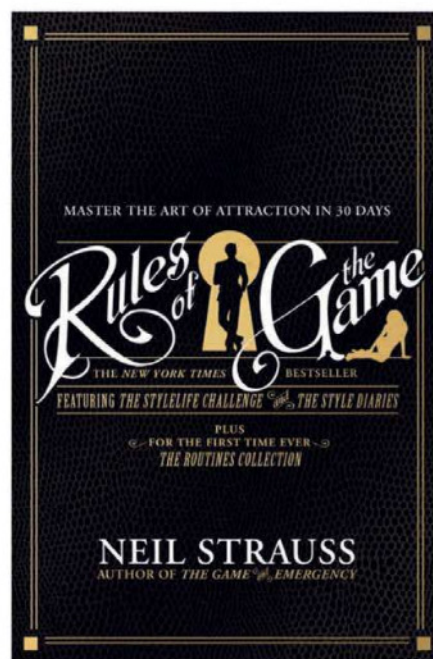
which the Japanese will shoot down. If you like science fiction, this chapter is certainly a compelling read.

As for the rest of the book, it may appeal more to the conspiracy theorist or the historian than to the average reader. It helps to know your history, a bit of sociology and some political and economic theory if you want to take a bite out of this book.



Written as the answer to the common travel book, the latest entry in the *Forbidden Knowledge* series, *Travel: 101 Things NOT Every Traveler Should Know How To Do* is full of information no traveler with a modicum of common sense would even consider attempting. It should be noted that this book was created purely for entertainment value (as stated in a handy disclaimer in the author’s introduction), as its chapters run the gamut from the inane (How to Pick Up a Ladyboy and/or Find a Cheap Sex Change Operation in Thailand, How to Look Tough in a Bad Neighborhood) to the illegal (How to Steal From Your Fellow Passengers, How To Fake a Passport, How to Smuggle Illegal Immigrants in Your Truck) to the outright ridiculous (How To Travel to the Past).

Disclaimer on moral, ethical and legal issues aside, the individual “chapters” (more like anecdotes) and fun art direction can’t hide the fact that flipping through the book is amusing until you realize that the novelty value wears off fast; it’s a joke that goes on for far too long, and you wonder why someone bothered to assemble it in the first place. This isn’t to take away from Michael Powell’s writing ability, as his irreverent tone suits the direction the book is striving for, but the superficial way he covers topics negates even the book’s supposed informational value. This is a shame, as the book ends up being neither here nor there; it’s obviously not to be taken seriously, yet nowhere near as funny as its creators obviously intended for it to be. At the end of the day, *101 Things NOT Every Traveler Should Know* would make a good novelty gift, but not something you’re likely to read over and over again.



Women have it easier than men, on the average. There is a glut of literature and popular media that discusses how a woman is supposed to walk, talk, dress, shop and even have sex. Countless women’s lifestyle magazines proudly digress on these topics, turning women into experts at personal representation and social involvement. While men have their own lifestyle magazines, they aren’t anywhere near as populous or as involved about how to pose, preen, prepare and present. Thank goodness, then, for the arrival of Neil Strauss. An everyman by his own admission (but decidedly a writer of considerable skill), he started out as someone far from the dating-and-accomplishment master that he is today. Eventually he decided to take a stand, and after years of study, practice, trial-and-error methods and solid determination, he found himself in the lifestyle that he would later describe in his seminal book, *The Game*.

*Rules of the Game*, the follow-up to that bestseller, looks under the hood of the machine that drives the contemporary dating lifestyle. Half of the book is a straightforward, unapologetic workbook, arming readers with Strauss’ 30-day methodology for bagging the girl of your dreams. ‘The Stylelife Challenge,’ as it’s called, walks you through essential lessons for improving your personality and besting your insecurities. The other half of *Rules of the Game* contains The Style Diaries: a series of anecdotes that Strauss has compiled to illustrate the nuances of seduction, and how it has its own twists and turns. Sometimes inspiring, sometimes alarming, always involving: these stories present a tapestry of the kind of life you could be leading if you truly commit yourself to the task. This lifestyle is not for the weak-willed or the easily discouraged. Anyone who has read *The Game* or is interested in becoming a person of better polish should get this book. In fact, anyone interested in the slightest in the nuances of human interaction should get it.

*All titles available at Fully Booked*





# THE PLAYBOY ADVISOR



**A** friend of mine has been insisting that I don't dress well enough. Since she's sort of a fashionista and all, I suppose I should listen to her, but I don't see what's wrong with my usual attire. I wear polo shirts and jeans; I think they look fine on me and on other men but she insists that they make me look too old. What should I wear instead?

—Bob, Kapitolyo, Pasig

*Your friend has a point. While the polo shirt/jeans combo is a reliable classic, that in itself is its greatest failing. You're dressed in a reasonably comfortable and presentable outfit, but it's commonplace and unremarkable. To make matters worse, a lot of service industries make use of that same basic look: do you really want to be mistaken for a barista or a waiter when you're out on a fancy date? And yes, that look is fine on some men, but only if they're clearly young and have a square-shouldered frame. If you really want to look good and trendy, watch shows like *Gossip Girl* and *Entourage*, where the major visual focus is exactly about dressing well. Pay attention to what's in, and try to find the right clothes to match the looks. Make sure that you don't overdo it, though, or dress up in a way that isn't comfortable for you. Even the most dashing outfit will look bad on you if you walk around with a nervous, shifting slouch. Half the impact of a good outfit is how you pull it off, after all, so carry yourself with confidence.*

.....

**I** have an old collection of Betamax and VHS tapes from way back when. Can I still save them, or just throw them away?

—Bennet, Alabang

*Why throw them away when you can preserve the classic stuff that you have? There are places that do video and audio transfer services from the old magnetic-tape years, so you can have your material translated into digital form. You can then save these in a variety of ways, such as individual MPEG or AVI files on your computer, or as DVDs. We don't suggest having your stuff converted into VCDs, though, because their audio and video characteristics are vastly overshadowed by the quality of DVD recordings. Granted, you may not be able to get your old family videos presented in 5.1 surround sound and a 16:9 aspect ratio since those are dependent on the sources, but you'll definitely have an imperishable version that won't be vulnerable to mold or heat. Just make sure to keep your new digital backups and copies in a clean, dry place.*

.....

**S**o much to do, so little time! I want to go out and party every night! How can I do that?

—Jomar, Las Piñas

*Nothing like living life in the fast lane, yes? PLAYBOY does encourage a*

*lifestyle where you can make the most of your waking hours, but bear in mind that everything has to be kept in balance. If you want to go out every night and party till the sun comes up, you have to make sure you have the time to rest and recover in the daylight hours. If you have a day job, that'll make regular partying a little difficult to manage, though. We're not saying that you can't still enjoy yourself on a nightly basis, but you run the risk of being a zombie at work. Go home at a reasonable hour: at least early enough to allow you a few good hours of solid sleep. Keep a planner and try to plan your nights ahead, too, so that you don't get caught up in the middle of mixed appointments.*

.....

**Y**ears ago I suspected a girlfriend was cheating on me. Although she denied it, I installed monitoring tools on our computer to capture her instant messages and e-mails. I was amazed at how convincing her lies had been. Since then I have monitored other women I've dated, either by shoulder-surfing to get their email passwords or by installing software. Anytime I suspect deceit, I obtain the truth. Perhaps this isn't ethical, but it has saved me a lot of time and heartache. I don't want these tools to ruin my integrity as a boyfriend or spoil my ability to trust a good-natured woman. But it's hard to establish that trust when you have seen firsthand how two-faced some people can be. What does the Advisor think?

—Redge, Malate, Manila

*We think that, much like John Ashcroft, the spying is getting you off. When you love a woman as much as you love the technology, maybe she'll be loyal to you.*

Something on your mind? The PLAYBOY Advisor answers your questions about life, love, the pursuit of happiness and most anything in between. Tell us who you are and where you're from, and what's been nagging at you. Email us at [theadvisor@pbphil.com](mailto:theadvisor@pbphil.com), and we'll publish the questions we find most interesting. PLAYBOY reserves the right to edit material for brevity and clarity. The most interesting question of the month gets the sender a free beer (or equivalent non-alcoholic beverage, for you non-drinkers) with the editorial team!



## ELECTRIC DREAMS THE HYBRID CAR

By Adrian Sanares and Mike Timbol



With each passing day, more of what we consider “standard” in normal society is beginning to change. Tired of the same old agendas their politicians perpetuate, the Americans have elected an African-American into the White House. Kids are becoming more informed and aware, thanks to the wonders of the Internet. Even our own people are starting to think for themselves. They no longer see our incoming elections as a popularity contest but rather as an opportunity to set things right.

We’re finally beginning to notice the things that we take for granted. One such example is our environment. Another is the rising prices of gasoline, which brings us to our topic for this month, the hybrid car. The hybrid car has been called the

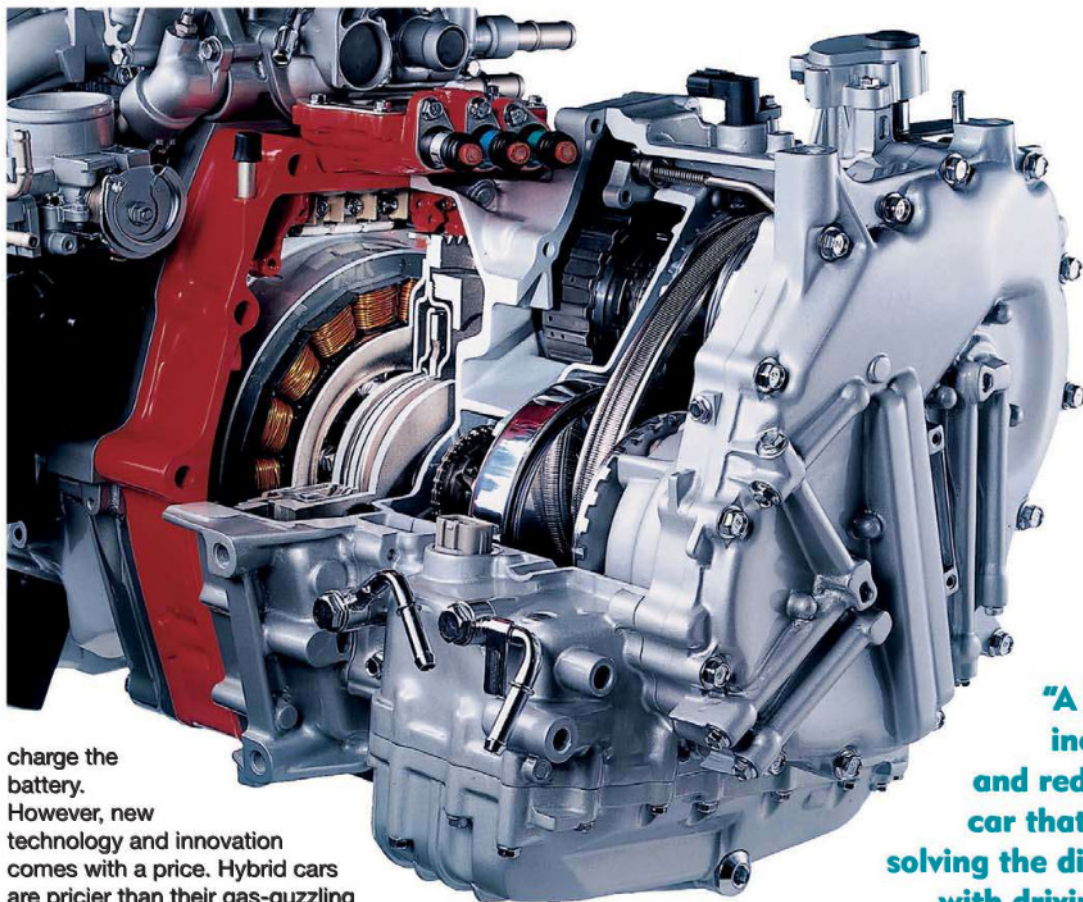
wave of the future, among other things. It has been described as environmentally sound and economically friendly. But what exactly is a hybrid car? How does it work? Is it really that different from the current crop of vehicles wandering our streets? More importantly, is it really worth getting one? Come and ride shotgun with us as we drive into the future with the hybrid electric car.

To put it simply, a hybrid car is a car with two engines. One is a gasoline-based engine and the other is an electric engine. It’s exactly what it sounds like, which is a gasoline-powered car cross-bred with an electric car. While gas-fueled cars cover a lot of road before they need to be refueled, can keep up with the other cars, and can be easily refueled, the problem lies with the fuel consumption and subsequent smoke emissions. Electric cars, in turn, don’t have this problem, but they run out of power rather quickly and sometimes there just isn’t a wall where you can plug to recharge the damn things. Hybrid cars have two engines, but expend less gas and in turn emit fewer vapors into the atmosphere. Though they still contain a fuel tank and a gasoline engine, the gas engine is smaller and employs technology that reduces emissions. The electric motor has a generator that uses energy from the batteries to accelerate the car but can also return some of the same energy to the batteries to slow the vehicle down. It also features an independent generator that acts solely to produce electricity in addition to the batteries.

A normal car’s fuel tank supplies gas to the engine, which turns the transmission, which then turns the wheels. An electric car uses batteries that provide power to an electric motor that turns the transmission, which then turns the wheels. A hybrid, however, attempts to increase the mileage and reduce the emissions of a car that runs on fuel while at the same time solving the dilemmas that come with driving an electric car. What makes a hybrid different is that it automatically switches between pure electric power, pure gasoline or diesel engine power, or a combined operation to optimize efficiency and performance. Hybrids can achieve 50% or more improvement in fuel economy during traffic-induced stop-and-go types of driving. This is where the electric motor works its magic and is most efficient.

Electric motors use no energy while idling, switching off whenever the car is at a full stop. They also use less than gas motors at low speeds. Gas motors, however, perform better at high speeds and can deliver more power for a given motor weight. This means that during stop-and-go driving, which is fairly common when driving through the city, the electric motor works great and as an added benefit does not produce any exhaust, therefore reducing smog levels. At higher speeds the gas motor kicks in and gives that zing so many car owners look for when driving on the highway. A hybrid will also never need to be plugged into an outlet; the gas motor lets the batteries recharge while it’s running. There have been reports of electric car owners having been stranded just out of range of an extension cord outlet. With hybrids, the gas motors start automatically when the batteries get low and then proceed to





charge the battery. However, new technology and innovation comes with a price. Hybrid cars are pricier than their gas-guzzling counterparts. A Toyota Prius costs about twice as much as a top-of-the-line Corolla Altis. Hybrids like the Prius contain metal hydride batteries that, when exposed, could potentially kill a person during a car crash since they use very high voltages. They also cost a lot to replace since they're currently not as common as your average car. The batteries in hybrids also die out every 150,000 to 200,000 miles. Even though the power sources are designed to last a lifetime, it really depends on how much you use the car and how you take care of it. There have also been reports of the handling being affected by the weight of the batteries.

Also, if you're the type of person who likes hearing your car's engine purr and roar, then a hybrid car might disappoint. Hybrids are much quieter than today's common cars; studies have shown that blind pedestrians are barely able to hear hybrid and electric cars as opposed to ones that run on gasoline.

While hybrid cars pride themselves on being environment-friendly, the process of making them is far from forthcoming. It actually takes more pollution to produce a hybrid car than it is to make a normal run-of-the-mill car. Its saving grace is that the hybrid's actual need for gasoline compensates for the increased energy needs and pollution it takes to actually make one. You'll also have to have your car serviced by the

**"A hybrid attempts to increase the mileage and reduce emissions of a car that runs on fuel while solving the dilemmas that come with driving an electric car."**

manufacturer or at an authorized dealer's shop if and when it breaks down, since the technology is fairly new and you'd be hard-pressed to look for a service center that has gotten with the program. This in turn will also make it difficult to look for surplus parts, and when you do, it will generally cost a lot more because most shops still run with the gas-based automobile in mind.

As with any vehicle, there will always be pros and cons when considering going for one. While a hybrid may sound like the practical choice, there will always be factors that you may or may not take into consideration. Yes, it can be a hassle to maintain a hybrid car. Yes, the energy cost for producing one will be more than it is for producing today's current crop of cars. However, you can't forget that despite all this, a hybrid car still uses less gas than one that is not. After all the initial spending and maintenance it takes to own a hybrid car, it's comforting to know that doing your part to save the environment can eventually be good not only for your soul, but also for your wallet. Drive safely!







## THE PLAYBOY FORUM

# NEW YEAR'S PEEVE

BY MIKHAIL LECAROS

ILLUSTRATION BY CHONG P. ARDIVILLA

HERE IN THE PHILIPPINES, ONE WOULD BE SHOCKED TO FIND FIREWORKS HANDLED IN MUCH THE SAME WAY AS OUR DEMOCRACY: WITH THE ATTITUDE OF A KID WHO'S COME INTO POSSESSION OF A SHINY NEW GADGET HE NEITHER APPRECIATES NOR DESERVES.

**P**hilippine culture is a colorful amalgamation, a mixture of the many traditions and beliefs that have made their way to our shores over the centuries. While there have definitely been benefits from our ability to adapt (Spaghetti with Lumpiang Shanghai, anyone?), some of our forebears' choices are downright odd (I love the game, but just how tall was the guy who decided that basketball should be our national sport?).

The foreign influence is present even in the way we celebrate the onset of the New Year. Thanks to the wonder of democracy — another assimilated invention — our people are born with the constitutional right to engage in pyrotechnic displays of which Chinese emperors of yore would be proud. It must be noted, however, that present-day Chinese are denied this right by their government (ironic, when one considers the fact that their ancestors invented fireworks in the first place). While many may scoff at

this lack of freedom, critics have a tendency to ignore and/or forget one of the main reasons behind our Chinese neighbors'

not being given a chance to blow stuff up, which is, quite simply: in the wrong hands, it's *dangerous*.

When it comes to fireworks in the Philippines, one would be shocked to find them handled in much the same way as our democracy: with the attitude of a kid who's come into possession of a shiny new gadget he neither appreciates nor deserves. Nonchalant at best, foolhardy at worst, this handling of potentially dangerous items should be more than enough reason to limit and regulate, if not outright ban, fireworks altogether.

Due to poor quality control and little to no enforcement of existing regulations, including one forbidding the sale of those with more than 2.5 grams of gunpowder, fireworks in the Philippines are more comparable to readily-available grenades, rather than being mere objects of whimsy and amusement.







## THE PLAYBOY FORUM

# NEW YEAR'S PEEVE

I am not without compassion, but I find myself unable to spare sympathy for those who would willingly subject themselves to the risks involved in dealing with *any* explosive device for the sake of entertainment and then run to the nearest medical institution when they lose a limb.

As for those who would enforce the aforementioned laws, our police and assorted armed forces are little better than those they are sworn to protect (this is saying a lot, considering that the citizens in question cheerfully place themselves in positions of potential forced amputation on an annual basis). In a yearly misguided attempt to prevent incidents of random firearm discharge, soldiers and police officers have their side arms' barrels taped. Pictures of smiling officers with taped guns are published in the major broadsheets before New Year's Eve as though it were something to be proud of, so as to reassure the public at large.

While I can understand the attempted wisdom behind this action, it is painfully obvious that it serves little purpose (except for those looking to commit crimes during the festivities) other than to display a lack of competence in those men and women with whom our safety is entrusted.

As a citizen looking at those photos, I wondered how anyone could possibly draw comfort from the fact that, on a night when entire streets would be cleared for the detonation of fireworks by potentially inebriated revelers, our local authorities are essentially neutered (for our protection). I cringe to think how an outsider (or worse, potential investor) would react to the photos, and I wonder why the powers-that-be ever approved them for publication. Worse yet,

### TAPING THEIR WEAPON BARRELS DURING NEW YEAR'S EVE: AN ACT OF ADMISSION THAT A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF STRAY BULLET CASUALTIES WAS INITIALLY CAUSED BY THE THEM?

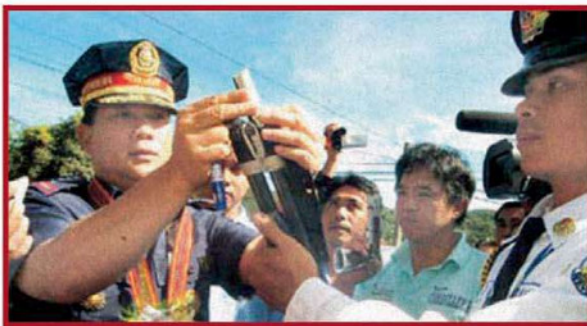
what if they never took these into consideration at all?

On New Year's Eve a couple of years ago, on my way to buy dinner, I found several families already outside their homes, positioning their fireworks for the midnight countdown. In some areas, revelers had blocked off entire lanes of streets in anticipation of the coming festivities. Rich, poor, old and young, they were all looking forward to the explosions.

As I was paying for my food, I noticed a child who couldn't have been more than 10 walk up to a roadside fireworks stall and ask to purchase a particularly colorful Super Lolo. Apparently, potential dismemberment was not the vendor's concern, for he dutifully placed the fanciful ordnance in a plastic bag before happily accepting the child's payment.

I considered reporting the unscrupulous vendor to the police as I walked back to my car, but thought better of it when I realized that, were I the vendor, I wouldn't be very intimidated by an officer armed with little more than harsh language and a taped sidearm. After all, the vendor was well within his rights to make a living, wasn't he? Far be it for me to stand in the way of free enterprise.

It truly saddens me to live in a country that suffers not from a shortage of meaningful legislature, but rather, one in which actual enforcement is either a myth or only made available to those who can pay for it. The Philippines is an amalgamation of cultures, and that isn't necessarily a bad thing. One has to wonder though, when will we assimilate common sense?



*Manila's Finest, seen here taping their weapons so as to ensure our protection over the holiday season.*



## WHY THE FORUM MATTERS

First appearing in the US edition's July 1963 issue, PLAYBOY Forum is a section that has always been about openness and interactivity, and fostering an impassioned back-and-forth discussion with our readers. From the start it has served as a colloquium between editors and readers on matters of freedom of speech and sexual rights (for more on this, see the Forum in our December 2008 issue). Today, the Forum serves as the policy nexus for the magazine, hitting upon a wide range of topics and considerations, and as a place to highlight the intersection of the PLAYBOY Philosophy (also explored in our December issue) with the nuts and bolts of the world around us. We welcome all who wish to have their opinions on the Forum topic of the month published to send their thoughts to [playboy@pbphil.com](mailto:playboy@pbphil.com) with the subject "FORUM."





## Box Office Returns

These are the top 10 downloaded movies of 2008:

- 1 *The Dark Knight* - **7,030,000**
- 2 *The Incredible Hulk* - **5,840,000**
- 3 *The Bank Job* - **5,410,000**
- 4 *You Don't Mess With The Zohan* - **5,280,000**
- 5 *National Treasure: Book of Secrets* - **5,240,000**
- 6 *Juno* - **5,190,000**
- 7 *Tropic Thunder* - **4,900,000**
- 8 *I Am Legend* - **4,870,000**
- 9 *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* - **4,400,000**
- 10 *Horton Hears a Who!* - **4,360,000**



## Acting Career = Political Credibility

There have been only **2** actors who eventually became president of their respective countries: Ronald Reagan and Joseph Estrada.

## How Ironic

The highest-rated movie with an R-rating happens to be *The Passion of the Christ*, which made **\$370,782,930**, and was also voted the most controversial movie of all time by *Entertainment Weekly*.

## Cheap Thrill

The lowest budget for a horror movie was **\$45**, and belongs to *Amateur Porn Star Killer*.



## Age Doesn't Matter

The oldest living actor today who is still active is Johannes Heesters, aged **105** years old. He's Dutch-Austrian, and has had a career spanning **87** years, while still appearing in both stage and television productions. The oldest director to win an Academy Award is Clint Eastwood for his work on *Million Dollar Baby*, the youngest being Norman Taurog for his work on *Skippy*.

## Sobrang Cheesy

The highest-grossing Filipino-made movie of 2009 is *You Changed My Life*, starring John Lloyd Cruz and Sarah Geronimo: it made **₱230.44** million.



## Not for Show

In an independent sex poll, **21%** of female moviegoers admitted they had thoughts of making out in a movie house during a screening.

## Speaking of Controversy...

*Midnight Cowboy* is the only X-rated movie to ever win an Oscar.



## Archaeology Means Big Bucks

Harrison Ford is the world's highest paid actor: he received a salary of **\$65,000,000** for starring in *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*.



## Welcome to the Twilight Zone

The most number of DVDs purchased for 2009 is of *Twilight*, having sold **9,306,970** copies so far.



# STILLS

The appreciation of beauty takes many forms, and as a photographer, your drive is always to create something that is as much a testament to your skill and perspective as it is about your aesthetics: your representation of what is appealing.



by Dante Gagelonia  
Photography by Bobot Meru



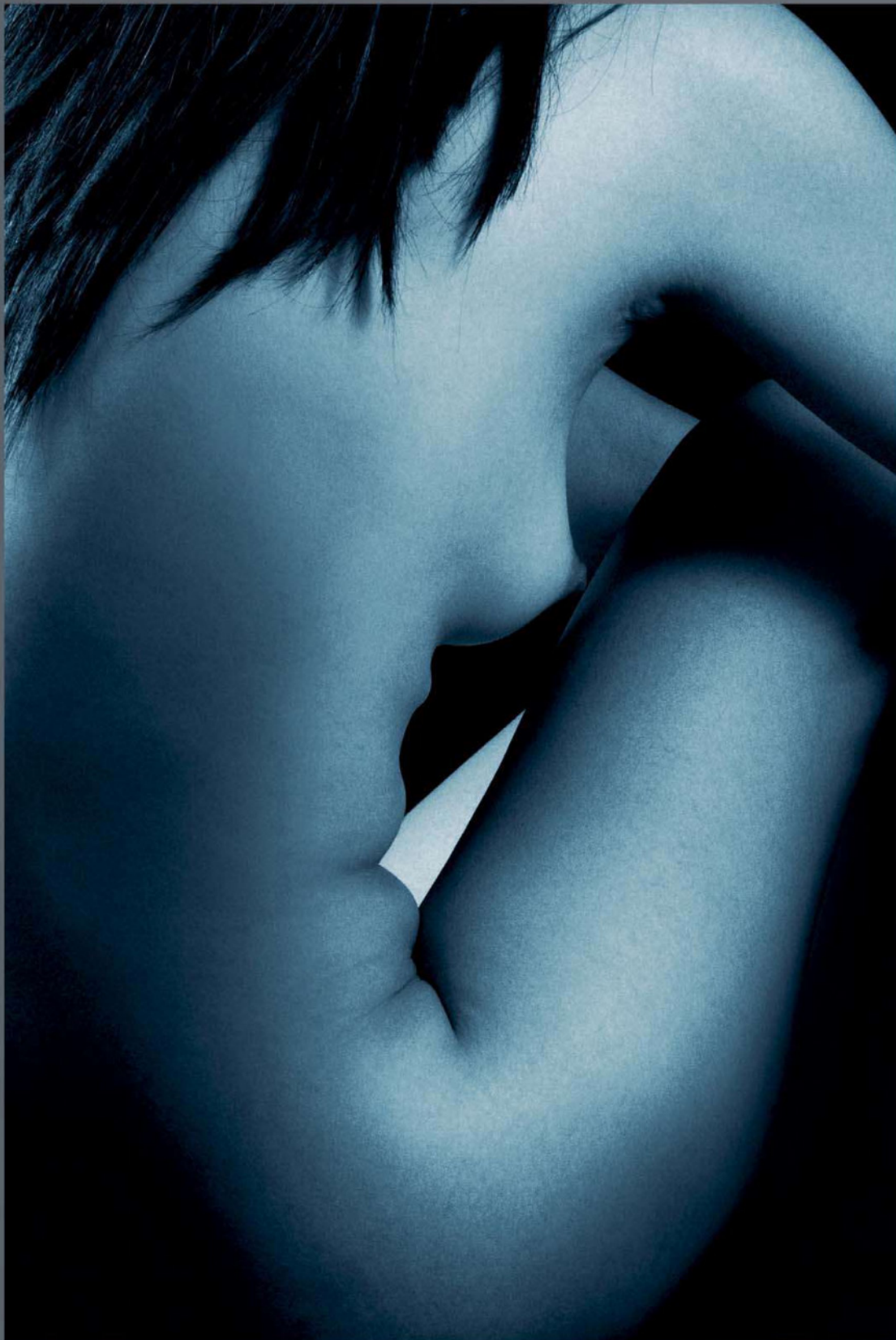
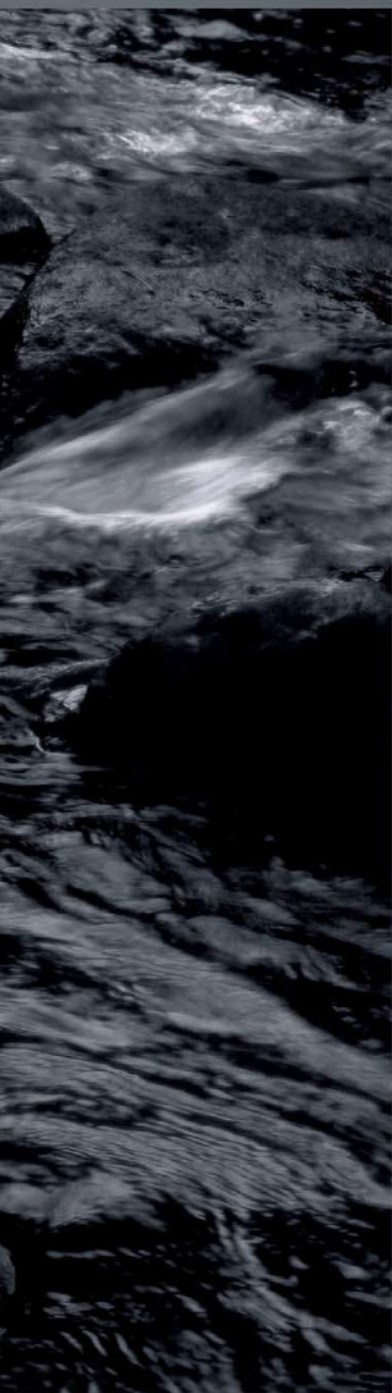


**A**lthough a majority of **Bobot Meru's** artistic nude shots are the product of his desire for professional leisure and a chance to recharge his creative batteries, his eye for detail and his framework for solid photographic principles are still in clear attendance. "When you do a lot of work that involves corporate sensibilities, for example, occasionally you need to take some time off," Meru explains. "If you're a writer, you sometimes need to write creatively about

something other than your usual material. When I feel that, I try to take shots that, yes, can decrease the boredom of too-familiar work, but I also take care to do things that are still publishable or viable for an exhibit. It's not just random or aimless fun."

Given this perspective, it's easy to see the logic behind how he composes and photographs artistic nudes. "I'm always after a play of light, a play of textures, a











play of shapes and forms. When you do an artistic nude, *dapat pagtingin mo, wala kang nararamdaman* other than the aesthetic appreciation. That's art for me, when you have shots that don't trigger a lustful feeling." He jokingly adds that it's even possible to do nudes of people who aren't the typical model frame or complexion: "It's about texture and composition *nga*, not the typical glamorous *pagandahan* in photos meant to excite."

One critical element in nude photography, he emphasizes, is respect for your models. "Notice how, in most of my nude shots, you don't see the faces of the people I photograph.

That's because of two things: first, you're focusing on their shapes and forms, as opposed to their identities, and second, you're respecting their privacy. If I take a picture of Tetchie Agbayani nude with her face clear in the shot, for instance, people will want to see it not because of the aesthetics but because it's her. I want observers to focus on the beauty of the form, not on who it is."

He also likes the notion of subjective appreciation: "It's fun when you finish [a shot] and look at it with an aesthetic point of view, as opposed to the 'original' intention of the photographer or the artist. And that is also tempered by cultural biases, by your upbringing."







From here, he goes on to talk about how beauty is in the eye of the beholder, as the adage goes, but there are still rules about what makes for a good photo. While the photographer's creativity and concept define the passion and aesthetic impact of a shot, the baseline for whether or not it can be deemed excellent is in the composition.

"The best definition of composition, which can be seen in these photographs, is in guiding the viewer's eye towards a defined subject, to express a certain idea, feeling or concept. It is about combining all the elements in the frame, to make a whole idea. When you look at a photograph, where do your eyes go? If you have the right composition, you have the right picture. A beautiful picture is built on that."







# Behind the Art of JAMES JEAN

The diversity of imagination is multiplied in a multicultural environment, and artists who manage to tap this creative wellspring can create art that is truly breathtaking. Multi-awarded young painter **James Jean** is one such individual.

He joined PLAYBOY during his short visit to the Philippines to talk about life, art, and the personality behind his paintings.

By Regina Layug and Mikhail Lecaros  
Photography by Amanda Bantug



**PLAYBOY:** You seem to have had a stereotypical Asian-American childhood, complete with piano lessons and ridiculously high SAT scores. How did your parents react when you told them you wanted to go to art school?

**JEAN:** My family emigrated to the US when I was three years old. My dad was in an industrial plastics company, and my mom worked in the company office. It wasn't a very artistic environment, of course. They were grooming me to be a doctor or a lawyer; I disappointed them bitterly when I applied for art school. My parents are nice people, but they were just afraid for me, that I would starve. I was pretty headstrong, and I think it helped encourage me to strive to really be self-sufficient, not only as a person living in New York. I worked very hard to make sure I could pay my rent, and I actually paid for school with scholarships and award money in my last two years. By that time, I was completely self-sufficient. I was twenty years old, and yeah, my parents didn't have to worry that much. I mean, I wasn't rich, but I wasn't on the street. I got good grades, and I suppose I could have gone to a prestigious school, but I decided to throw it all away and move to New York to try and do art.

**PLAYBOY:** Growing up, did anyone ever give you grief for being Asian?

**JEAN:** Yeah, a little bit. I mean, growing up in New Jersey, there wasn't an Asian community around, hence my very poor Mandarin skills. I was a very bad, bad Chinese, because I wanted very much to assimilate, but I went to college, my feelings completely reversed. I went to China and Taiwan, traveled a little bit. I never felt like I fully belonged anywhere, and I think that sense of alienation and marginalization just made me stronger as an artist later on.

I think I was really encouraged by a lot of people around me to pursue art. I would draw and I grew up reading comic books, and the School of Visual Arts in New York was the only college that had a cartooning department, so that was the only school I applied to. After going to school, I discovered painting and the rest of the art world, and I found out that's what I was really meant to do: not comics, but painting.



From left to right: Jean's art spans various media, often incorporating traditional art techniques with digital effects and presentation; Jean's first comic book cover assignments were for Batgirl, but it was his work on *Fables* that won him widespread acclaim.

**PLAYBOY:** We read somewhere that comic books were a big influence on your art. Can you tell us which artists in particular?

**JEAN:** When I was a kid, yeah, I liked Jim Lee and all those guys. But as far as style goes, I mean, Alex Ross is great, but our approaches are completely different. When I grew up, I read Jim Lee's work and Marc Silvestri. Actually, Marc Silvestri's drawings of Wolverine were in the very first comic I'd ever seen, *Wolverine* #37. So, I was 13 years old, and now I'm friends with Jim Lee, so it's kind of funny.

**PLAYBOY:** Does your approach change with regard to the medium? Do you have a different approach for doing paintings, illustrations and comic book covers?

**JEAN:** Well, I've done a little sequential art in the past, but the thing is, I realized I'm not a good cartoonist. It requires a specific talent that I don't really have, so I like to concentrate on the single image. For illustrations, I like to tell the whole story in one image, but with painting, my personal work, it's different in that I don't usually work from a detailed sketch. It's more improvisational, it's more direct. For illustrations, I usually do a small sketch that's blown up and everything's planned out. The excitement comes from trying to find a new way to destroy the original sketch as I come up with something new and fresh in the piece I'm trying to make. And you know, that contrasts with the painting, which is completely a battle within myself, where I make a mark that sort of affects everything that happens after and I respond on the canvas.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you have a preferred medium?

**JEAN:** In traditional media, I like to use everything from charcoal to acrylic to oils. On the digital end, I love Photoshop and the computer because I enjoy designing books and laying out pages and designing my own website, working with typography. So, on either end, it's whatever helps me to achieve my goals.

**PLAYBOY:** When you were doing covers for comic books, how much collaboration did you have with the writers or editors in your designs?

**JEAN:** In the beginning, there was some direction, but eventually, they came to trust me. When I was doing comic covers—I'm not anymore, but when I was—I think they enjoyed my interpretation of the characters and the story, which were unconventional at the time, yet appealing to the audience.

**PLAYBOY:** When you were doing work for DC Comics, was it like being a kid in a candy store drawing all those famous characters?

**JEAN:** You know, what was funny was, when I worked on *Green Arrow*, I hated the way the character looked; I hated his green costume, his blond goatee. I was used to drawing Batgirl, and Batgirl's a fun character to draw. She's dynamic, female, sexy, you know, with that pop influence. With *Green Arrow*, I wasn't used to drawing this dude with a blond goatee. If you look at the covers, I'm actually trying to hide him or obscure him. [laughs] And also, the color green's really hard to work with, so I'd always tweak the colors so he'd be off-green or bluish green or some other variation to make it more appealing for me.

**PLAYBOY:** In an interview, you once said that in your younger days, your primary motivation in life was girls, but that now it's food. Care to elaborate?

**JEAN:** I don't want to make any crude jokes, but you can still feast on women. [laughs] I started doing illustrations for Playboy when the art director just emailed me; he'd seen some of my previous work. And it's interesting to hear that Hugh Hefner personally approves all the images that go into the magazine.





**PLAYBOY:** How did you get the Prada gig?

**JEAN:** It was an amazing experience because, basically, they gave me complete freedom to do whatever I wanted. They gave me great exposure, it paid very well and it was an extremely gratifying collaboration. It just went both ways: what I gave them, they translated it from the source to the clothing and all the other things they did. I'd always wanted to work in fashion, but I always thought it was kind of impossible. I sort of got in through an unusual route: not through advertising, but through professional illustration. I was commissioned to do the wallpaper for their stores!

**PLAYBOY:** Do you spend a lot of time online? How much stock do you put in online criticism of your work?

**JEAN:** Not that much, but I like taking the temperature of how my work affects other people. So, yeah, I'll obsessively blog search myself. [laughs] I used to have comments on my blog, and I embrace the negative comments, but ultimately, I embrace well-thought-out and intelligent criticism. I think it's fun. I'm aware of the negatives, and I think I'm my own worst critic, so anything anyone else can say about my work doesn't really mean anything to me. I would say, on the whole, all the comments I've had have been very positive, but I think my self-criticism comes from [being an artist]. As an artist, you're a self-loathing bastard, usually, so it's a good balance.

**PLAYBOY:** Have you ever had a piece that you wish you could have had just a little bit more time on?

**JEAN:** No, I think each piece is executed to its utmost degree. Actually, the thing was, when I was doing illustration—I'm very good with deadlines—everything was finished two days before deadline, so I would have time to look at it some more.

**PLAYBOY:** Having just spoken at the 21st Philippine Ad Congress, what can you tell us about the experience?

**JEAN:** It was a surreal experience because I'd just gotten off the plane, and we drove three hours to the Ad Congress, and I gave a presentation on no sleep after flying in from Belgium, so it was kind of a shock! I hope I seemed semi-coherent. I don't know what people thought! [laughs] I know during the signing afterwards, it was only about an hour after the presentation, but it was a long line! I was nodding off, my eyes were getting crossed, and I couldn't see what I was signing. [laughs]

**PLAYBOY:** What kind of movies or TV shows do you watch?

**JEAN:** I watch a lot of movies, but I can never remember any of them! Well, I like beautifully made films, like for instance, on the plane over, I saw *The Reader*; it was very poignant. *Zombieland* was a fun movie; it was pretty good. I pretty much see everything, from classic movies, everything in the Criterion Collection, to really bad movies, which I usually catch on airplane movies. Not that *The Reader* was a bad movie. [laughs] I saw lots of other bad movies on the ride here! Like *Land of the Lost*, my God! There isn't anything I wouldn't see, but if I have to pay for it, I usually try and make it something worthwhile. If it's free on the airplane, it doesn't really matter. [laughs] I saw this movie, *Big Man Japan*, have you heard of that? My taste skews in all directions, as long as it's something interesting. I won't watch something that's cliché or a teen movie. I watch a lot of TV shows, but not on TV. I like *House*, *30 Rock*. I like Conan O'Brien, so that I try and catch, but I've been travelling for three weeks!

**PLAYBOY:** What videogames are you playing now?

**JEAN:** I'm playing *Katamari Forever*! I just got that right before I left on my book tour, and it's the most addictive game ever. The graphics are great, it's so satisfying rolling up all that stuff, but there's a time limit, so there's strategy involved.

**PLAYBOY:** Have you ever considered doing visual conceptualization or production design for film?

**JEAN:** Not really. I mean, I've been asked to be master architect behind the visual design of a movie, but I wouldn't want to do that. I'd take a smaller role. I mean, I've had the pleasure of working with someone like Alex McDowell, who's the production designer of movies like *Fight Club*, *Minority Report*, *Watchmen*; he's great! But I think, primarily, it's too complicated, with so much delegating. I just like working on painting. So if someone wants to take my



*James Jean's visit to the Philippines was a busy one, starting off with a talk at the 21st Philippine Ad Congress and continuing with interviews and book/art signings courtesy of Fully Booked.*

paintings and transform them into a virtual environment, then yeah, that's something I could look forward to.

**PLAYBOY:** We understand that you travelled around Asia and that it was a life-changing experience. How did this come about?

**JEAN:** It's kind of a funny thing. There's a program called the China Synergy program, where they invited overseas ethnic Chinese to apply for a free trip for about a month throughout all of China. They would take you from Hong Kong to Guangzhou to Shanghai to Beijing; it was their way of sort of attracting people from abroad. So, 200 people eventually got in, and we were shepherded around China. I think my parents must have seen the opportunity in the Chinese newspaper and they sent it to me. I was the only artist in the group, and it was the first time I was able to be around my peers, which was very eye-opening. It was my first time in China. My first time taking a trip that long and abroad. This was in 2001.

**PLAYBOY:** Was there any single experience where you realized you were glad you'd made the trip, that it was worth it?

**JEAN:** Yeah, it was the girls! All these young, attractive Guangzhou women, and they seemed to like me, too. It was an amazing experience because growing up in New Jersey, I mean, yeah, I went to the prom, the junior prom, but the dating pool was very limited for me, you know? I don't want to get into it; this is for my therapist!

**PLAYBOY:** And this made your parents happy, you discovering your roots?

**JEAN:** Yeah, my mom reads my blog now, which can be kind of embarrassing when you're drawing porn stars, but yeah, they were happy. Every year, they inquire about my business, and every year, it's gone better and better than previous years, so they're very happy.

**PLAYBOY:** What projects do you have in the works?

**JEAN:** I have a few books out. My new book is *Pier 3*, which contains my personal sketches, and I have a poster book out, and a new gift item, *Scrawl*. These are empty journals. I just did the covers and packaging design, so there's like a lined journal, a blank journal and a gridded journal for diary entries or sketching or diagrams. There's no art inside, just the covers.

I hope to have more gallery shows, so that's what I'm working on right now, just a new body of work that will hopefully make it into a new show. I might try sculpture or video installations, but I have a lot of time...a lot of people try to do everything at once and blow their load. I just want to concentrate on the paintings and see where it takes me, let it develop naturally.







# the pinoy indie experience

## A Mash-up of Chaos and Contradiction



**Digital Democratization:** The emergence of indie festivals like Cinemalaya and Cinema One, which award production grants and cash prizes to many emerging filmmakers, have been instrumental in developing a constant output of fresh digital features.

By Ed Lejano

**T**he festival acclaim Filipino independent films have been receiving around the globe has thrust a spotlight on its cinema, which has recently made its presence felt on the world film radar.

The international awards recently bestowed on our indie films follow the trail blazed by Brillante Mendoza's victory as Best Director in Cannes last year. What were sporadic appearances in a few festivals in the past have now blossomed into a film wave from our Southeast Asian nation.

Our frenetic indie cinema is a repository of current Philippine realities as a developing country coming to terms with its socio-political past and facing the challenges of globalization.

Our country, known for its beautiful beaches and hospitable people, is also the world's new capital for international call centers and business processing offices. Beneath the postcard-pretty islands and progressive industries lie undercurrents of fatalism.

The recent flood disaster in our capital lends a dark resonance to an emerging wave signaling an increasing profile in the festival circuit. The twin

murders of Alexis Tioseco and his girlfriend Nika Bohic, both film critics, last August have left the usually vibrant indie scene unnerved.

Such disquieting events come amidst recent strides. The dual impulses of chaos and contradiction in our films find roots in their convent-meets-Hollywood heritage, setting the Philippines apart from its Asian neighbors.

Our Spanish and American colonial pasts have imbued the nation with a pervasive Catholic influence with an outwardly Western outlook. The dichotomies of rich vs. poor, privilege vs. injustice and redemption vs. sin have embellished its cinema with a particular flavor.

The blend of rosaries and McDonald's lends a distinct quality to this tropical democracy where English is the second language and where the Church still wields a powerful influence over a population of more than 85 million. It is also the world's texting capital and the country that invented the term "Imeldific."

Uncle Sam's legacy of democracy has led to a freewheeling society characterized by problematic administrations and gaping differences among the social





“Indie cinema is a repository of current Philippine realities as a developing country coming to terms with its socio-political past and facing the challenges of globalization.”

classes. It has also spawned a generation weaned on pop culture, mp3s and Quentin Tarantino.

Last August's funeral of former President Corazon Aquino, a well-loved icon of the People Power revolution, marked the passing of an era where radical social change was sought. Not much has changed under the current president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, whose unpopularity with the middle class is partly due to corruption allegations. With elections looming, the nation can expect more lively things to come.

Gritty realism and a slow-paced, arty feel form part of what's been characterized as the 'Filipino Festival Movie.' Using low budgets and handheld HD videos, the current narratives explore various facets of life in a developing country.

The edgy realism of many of these digital features allows a window into the Philippine experience brimming with found stories and distinct textures. The specter of poverty hovers constantly in the background, with the occasional shock elements of violence and sex-of varying genders-thrown in for good measure.

The exotic and erotic make for effective twin ingredients for the typical

indie vehicle in an industry long dominated by mainstream productions. The last few years have seen changes in the equation, with indie films gaining better visibility. Of 2008's output of 80-plus features, roughly two-thirds are considered independently produced.

Foreign blockbusters still rule in the Philippines' armada of malls that have sprouted in urban centers nationwide. Local commercial films have adopted tent-pole approaches for distribution, which have helped bring in more revenues for the big studios, shifting the usual imbalance for Hollywood productions.

The remake phenomenon has reached the body of works from our movie-loving nation. Hollywood has recently produced *The Echo*, a remake of a Filipino horror film directed by the same director: Yam Laranas. A few years back, a Korean film adapted the classic skin flick *Scorpio Nights* by 80's auteur Peque Gallaga.

Despite their current high-profile status, many indie productions struggle to find their niche in the market-driven cinema industry. The low cost of typical digital features has made their production less risky, but their box-office figures have been less than remarkable.

With usual budgets ranging from \$20,000-60,000, the Filipino indies perhaps illustrate an alternative option as a filmmaking model in these downturn times.

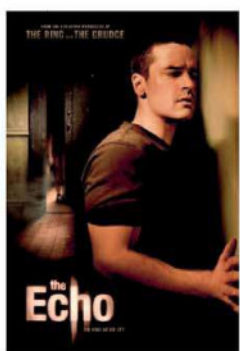
The term 'indie' has evolved to also mean gay films in the local pirated markets. Gay-themed digital features have had their own niche that owes its sustainability to a loyal Filipino following.

Indie branding can sometimes serve as a helpful distribution label for a product in a competitive entertainment marketplace. While a number of Filipino titles have scored foreign distribution deals, many contend with limited local releases or go straight to video.

The tools of digital technology have liberated many filmmakers from the constraints of high financing. The DIY spirit and a burning desire to tell home-grown stories for universal audiences have helped many cash-strapped filmmakers realize their visions for the global screen.

The emergence of indie festivals like Cinemalaya, Cinemania and Cinema One, which award production grants and cash prizes to many emerging filmmakers, have been instrumental in developing a constant output of fresh digital features.





**From top to bottom:** Jose 'Pepe' Diokno's tale of vigilante killings, *Engkwentro*, won the Luigi de Laurentiis Award at the 2009 Venice Film Festival; Anthony Sanchez won acclaim for his cinema vérité approach in *Imburnal*; *Sigaw* spawned one of those rare remakes made by the original director, Yam Laranas.

Prior to the digital age, Lino Brocka was the most well-known Filipino director. His politicized films were considered a touchstone for Philippine national cinema. Now, the indie wave is attributable not just to one name but a handful. The legacy of Brocka's social realist films still lingers in the works of these filmmakers, albeit in a new light.

Butchering the ties of melodrama and overt political messages, there is a mash-up of real-time narratives, minimalist slice-of-life dramas, maximal-length indie epics, stylized black and white features, arthouse docudramas and experimental works spanning the range of the Philippine line-up.

Lav Diaz stakes a unique claim as the country's most challenging filmmaker with his trademark static long takes and epic-length narratives. *Melancholia* (Best Film, Horizons Section, 2008 Venice) is typical of his works, not only for the sheer audacity of its almost 8-hour running time but also for the sweeping breadth of its philosophical narrative.

First-time filmmakers Jim Libiran and Pepe Diokno, both products of the Cinemalaya film fest—the former awarded Best Picture, the latter curiously ignored—adopt a documentary-like approach in capturing snippets of gang life in the slums.

Libiran's *Tribu* (Best Film, 2007 Cinemalaya; Young Filmmaker Award, 2008 Paris Cinema) utilizes real gangsters for providing a glimpse of the violent life in Tondo, one of Manila's slum areas. Filipino hip-hop music constantly wafts through the raw gangsta air where, in one visceral night, its young narrator comes of age.

*Engkwentro* (Best Film, Horizons Section & Luigi de Laurentiis Award, 2009 Venice) explores similar terrain but transplants the action to an unnamed provincial city. Diokno's use of a long-take effect throughout the movie ambitiously depicts vigilante-style killings that feel as real as the news headlines they are based on.

Sherad Anthony Sanchez's *Imburnal* (Special Mention, 2009 Bangkok International; Grand Prize, NETPAC Award & Woosuk Award, 2008 Jeonju, Korea; Lino Brocka Award, 2008 Cinemalaya) offers an uncompromising vision of marginalized folk and uses non-professional actors that mix art house style with cinema vérité.

The artist as terrorist is John Torres' daring take on contemporary realities in his debut film, *Todo Teros* (FIPRESCI/NETPAC Award, 2006 Singapore; Dragons and Tigers Award, 2006 Vancouver). A meditative, autobiographical piece culled from found footage, travelogues and home videos, it demonstrates the experimental impulse freshly thriving among the crop of indies.

Another young filmmaker who recently basked in the festival limelight is Raya Martin. His two consecutive forays in Cannes, *Now Showing* (Director's Fortnight, 2008 Cannes)

and *Independencia* (Grand Prize & NETPAC Award, 2009 Bangkok International; Un Certain Regard, 2009 Cannes) bestow much promise for the 25-year old director.

His lush black and white opus mimics the style of filmmaking of a bygone era in portraying an allegorical tale with his own postcolonial perspective. A throwback novelty it is from the usual third world poverty-porn that some filmmakers are prone to show.

Martin teams up with Adolfo Alix Jr. for the twin bill drama *Manila* (Out-of-Competition Special Screening, 2009 Cannes; Opening Film, 2009 Cinemalaya). The two directors rework the storylines of two classic Filipino dramas in a black and white homage to Brocka and another film master, Ishmael Bernal. Local heartthrob Piolo Pascual graces the screen in an atmospheric star vehicle that he also co-produced.

Alix's other entry in the program, *Adela* (Best Actress, 2008 Cinemalaya) showcases the filmmaker's dexterity in tackling various types of subjects. With close to 12 features films since his first film four years ago, the prolific director now presents a minimalist slice-of-life of a poor elderly woman celebrating her 80th birthday. A stellar turn for veteran Filipino actress Anita Linda, her titular performance lends a bittersweet quality to the real-time drama.

Brillante Mendoza's surprise win for *Kinatay* (Best Director, Main Competition, 2009 Cannes) is the crème de la crème honor for a Filipino director so far. The recognition bestows bragging rights for being the festival darling of the season with an air of controversy trailing him. His previous competition entry, *Serbis*, created quite a stir in 2008's Cannes, a trend he continued in 2009.

With a trademark gritty style set in real-time, *Kinatay* charts a plot structured into two contrasting acts. It opens in a felicitous mood that gradually shifts to a grimmer tone as it portrays a harrowing long night's descent into a violent, criminal life.

From 2007 comes *Slingshot* (Silver Screen Award & FIPRESCI/NETPAC Award, 2008 Singapore; Special Jury Award, 2007 Marrakech; Caligari Film Award, 2007 Berlinale). Mendoza's chronicle of poverty and desperation is set in yet another slum community, its multithread situations playing out chaotically against a backdrop of religious festivities and local elections.

While the international awards are a telling barometer of the Filipino indies' growing recognition, for many of its filmmakers, festival-style glamor is a long way from the harsh reality of funding their future projects. Yet the prospects seem bright that the recent acclaim some have gained reflects a status update that says it's not a flash in the festival pan.

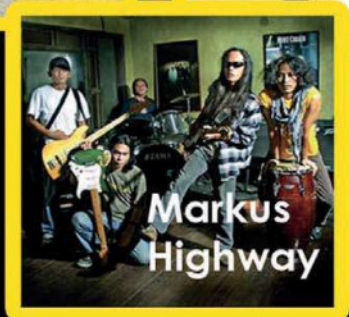
The rich tapestry of our indie films reflect varying realities in all its chaotic and contradictory dimensions. Amidst these downturn times, it presents a vision of Pinoy (dis)order for all the world to experience.





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# This Movie Will Destroy You

Welcomed into his den, we talked to director Khavn De la Cruz about his latest opus and came back with an infernal vision of urban decay. This is PLAYBOY's exclusive, rough-cut screening of the much-anticipated film adaptation of the novel *Mondomanila*. Prepare thy guts for a blessed hell ride.

BY KARL DE MESA

“So what do you think?” says Norman.

We’re in his house somewhere in UP Village. There’s daylight so it’s likely a weekend morning since we both have jobs or classes. Norman’s first wife, tall and lean, is curled up in one corner, smoking, as she watches TV. There’s a sheaf of stories in front of me, stapled and printed in Times New Roman.

I remember because I hate that font. I remember this is the late 1990s because Kurt Cobain just died and I’m still trying to slog through college while doing odd jobs at magazines and newspapers. I remember we’d been doing tons of weed, reading novels by guys like Irvine Welsh and Chuck Palahniuk and Brett Easton Ellis, and watching way too many fucked-up movies of the same transgressive nature.

Norman is Norman Wilwayco, available to me as to all his friends as Iwa. Iwa is asking me about his short story. It’s titled “*Kung Paano Ko Inayos ang Buhok Ko Matapos ang Mahaba Haba Ring Paglalakbay*.” He plans to submit it to the Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards, what passes for a gateway honor to becoming a notable in the local literary scene.

“You think it sucks,” he infers and laughs.

“I think it’s good. I really like the violence and gore but it’s a bit gimmicky in places. Like the title. I think ‘Kahon’ is better,” I finally conclude.

Fast forward to the early 2000s. Not only did the short story win a Palanca Award but Iwa has also transformed the spirit of that same story into a monster of a novel.

That novel is now *Mondomanila*; published as a paperback in 2002 by Automatic Writings and currently available in select bookstores. It is the benchmark opus of Pinoy transgressive

literature and the catechism to Iwa’s growing number of fans, sychophants and acolytes. It has catapulted Iwa into stardom as a force of the written word not to be messed with.

Of course, it too won the grand prize at the Palancas. Which only proves I know jack shit about what makes an award-worthy piece of Filipino writing.

*In my mother’s belly and I’m starting to kick / Nine months in the womb and I’m making her sick ~ Tricky, “Council Estate”*

Kamias Road Studios serves very tasty, home-cooked meals. And director Khavn De la Cruz (an artist of immense energy in several media, not to mention the godfather of local digital cinema and the brains behind the Dot Mov Film Festival) is a gracious host.

Right now, however, he’s dozing on the couch beside me. “*Pasensya na, pre. Napuyat ako kagabi*,” he says, squinting against the 1PM light, ushering me through the gate.

We retreat into Khavn’s recording studio where it’s comfy and dark and there’s two couches. On one wall sits a squad of guitars in their hard cases or gig bags. On the opposite wall is a small library, in front of which is a grand piano. The same piano where folk-jazz singer Isha shot her album cover and beside which is the guitar that Lav Diaz (director of *Batang West Side*) used to record his solo album *Impiyerno*.

Khavn feeds his portable hard drive to the DVD player and in turn feeds the player to the TV. There’s a few moments of confusion and technical difficulty as one of the A/V cables doesn’t sit too well with the port and Khavn stands awkwardly, leaning over the whole catastrophe in his pajamas, trying to fix the misbehaving thing.

Satisfied that the player will not suffer another tantrum, Khavn



closes his eyes and naps as I view his latest, most expensive movie.

*They call you crime rate / They call you "can't go straight"*  
~ Tricky, "Council Estate"

The first thing that I notice about the movie *Mondomanila: Kung Paano Ko Inayos ang Buhok Ko Matapos ang Mahaba Haba Ring Paglalakbay* is the light and sharpness of color. It's amazingly lit in an almost Hollywood-feature-film fashion. Along with the well-thought cinematography, camera angles and blocking, this movie is a rollercoaster for the eye.

As an adaptation, Khavn focuses on the spirit of the book instead of trying to be loyal to the text. In so doing (since he and Norman penned the screenplay themselves) he refuses to play the novel's game and instead levels the field by making use of celluloid's native strengths.

"Kung ano lang yung grand scheme ng novel, yun lang yung nilagay ko on-screen," says Khavn. "Kasi kung isisiksik mo yung novel into a few pages – *parang* abridged or condensed version – *ano yung ilalagay mo?* If you only have 90 minutes to tell the novel's story, what then? Yun din yung hinihingi ko kay Iwa, eh, nung ginawa namin yung screenplay. Ano ba yung gusto mo talagang sabihin?"

*Mondomanila* the novel is about the life and times of Tony De Guzman, an everyman hero who grew up in the harsh community of the slums. Unlike most of his squatter friends, however, he (in his own words) 'made something of himself' and went to Baguio. The story progresses through both memory and current narration when Tony leaves Baguio for Quezon and, afterwards, for Banahaw.

Along the way, we are introduced to characters from Tony's past mixed in with scenes of drugs, sex and violence so casual in the



## Without giving too much in the way of spoilers, the following visceral, transcendent scenes are not to be missed:

> The *Tropang Praning* posse of Tony (played aptly by the young Timothy Mabalot, who won acclaim last year in *Nursery*, a Cinemalaya entry) drinking in their upper storey, graffiti-tagged (with great art done by set designer Dante Perez) den. They have rats on kebab skewers for their *pulutan*. They argue, brag and tease each other. Tons of profanity is spoken. A disco ball revolves on the ceiling.

> The spoken introduction by Pango, who speaks in barely understood "*ngo ngo-ish*" with a tall, colorful jester's hat from atop a building's construction. Reminds one of the narrator-clown in *House of 1000 Corpses*.

> The Magdalena Sisters, a trio of young girl siblings, coupling with each other enthusiastically in their small hovel as the *Tropang Praning* watch them through holes in the walls.

> Ogo X (played by Bonbon Valerozo) is a young rapper whose arms are almost vestigial. His right arm is amputated and withered from just the shoulder on down. His left arm curves almost backwards and he has a claw for a hand (which doesn't look like it works until he picks up a spoon in a later scene) with only three digits. He raps well enough, though. He raps about drugs: "*Droga! / Ito ba ang kasagutan?*"

> Tony De Guzman delivering a scathing character monologue as he's sitting on a small bridge that runs across a creek. He rants about poverty and death and the sad state of *The Looban*.

> Mother Maria (played by Marife Necesito, a co-star of Gael Garcia Bernal in *Mammoth*) and Almang Paybsiks (starring the now huge but always interesting Whitney Tyson) fight on the street, in the mud, amid a cheering crowd.

> The young gay man, Naty, gets reamed in the shower by child pornographer Steve Banners aka White Boy. Just as Naty is about to climax, his dad, Sgt. Pepper, shoots Steve in the head. Chaos ensues and Mutya and Tony case the empty house.

> Pablong Shoeshine (starring the old-school actor Palito) rants about effective arson to a corpse in a coffin as they drink beer. He's got garish orange pants on, orange earmuffs and a necktie that turns out to be shaped like a penis.







slums – like his mother (the aborted, aspiring actress), his younger brother (pushed to prostitution by their neighbor), Almang Paybsiks (their former landlady), Sgt. Pepper (the homophobic ex-military man), Naty (the gay friend), Pablong Shoeshine, Elmer and his addict friends. And there is also Karla, the apple of Tony's eye.

*Bending all the rules where you bury your tools / Your family can't visit because the prison's too far ~ Tricky, "Council Estate"*

It is a testament to Khavn's skills as a director that he stays true to the energy and heart of the novel he considers a postmodern, post-millennial version of Edgar Reyes' seminal book *Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag*.

Everything, from the hellish introduction of credits done in illustrations (close-ups of feces, a man eating the innards of his own penis, a pregnant woman eating her newborn kid, a rat being chased by a knife and finally beheaded, two women fornicating while a dog mounts the woman who's on all fours) to the marvelously uplifting, Bollywood-style song and dance ending (excellently choreographed by Donna Miranda), speaks a mastery of foresight.

Khavn and his skeleton crew shot within a marathon five days in Batangas and Quiapo, but mostly in and around the squatters' area of Agham Road -- that sprawling labyrinth of

shanties and slums between Ayala's TriNoma mall and Quezon Avenue.

Earlier, I said the lighting was amazing. It also expands and nails the metaphor of the scenes. Khavn tells me he still plans to cut the total running time down, make it tighter, to around 50 minutes. There is also a lot of sound design that's still to be covered.

From what I saw of the rough cut that clocked in at one hour plus, it's already an astounding film. This is our own *City of God*, *Trainspotting* and *Fight Club*, made by a Third World auteur for the intelligent Third World viewer.

*Mondomanila* is a movie forged of dark ecstasy. At turns scatological and exquisite, vulgar and majestic, obscene and holy. This is the Pinoy exorcism of crippling poverty through violence, drugs, sex. Unafraid, it transmutes all that into an ally for apotheosis.

This is the film that will destroy you, make you whole again and deliver you to the doorstep of illumination. Wait for it. Watch it. Behold its infernal truth.

*Can't break it, can't take who you are / But remember, boy, you're a superstar ~ Tricky "Council Estate"*





# Director's Cut

Our exclusive Q & A with *l'enfant terrible* of Philippine cinema, Khavn de la Cruz, on the triumphs, tribulations and odyssey of how he finally completed *Mondomanila*

**A**s a creative, there are few people in the country who can match up to Khavn de la Cruz's laundry list of accomplishments and laurels. He's a filmmaker (*Three Days of Darkness*, *Squatterpunk*, *Bahag Kings*), fictionist (*Ultraviolins*), poet (*Lines on the Sole*, 2009), publisher (he's the man behind Automatic Writings) and musician (he leads the avant-punk band The Brockas and has released several solo albums).

It is no secret that Khavn is one of the most vital auteurs of our time. His reputation alone proves it: "*Enfant terrible* of Philippine Cinema" (Giovanni Sapnoletti); "*Che Guevarra* of the digital revolution" (Jose Victor Marin); "*The Lars Von Trier* of the Philippines" (Julien Fonfrede). So, it would be easier to exhale a heaving, awed "et cetera!" to his deeds as a director who's conquered audiences in almost every continent he's visited.

At the core of his body of work is a mantra of action and disdain for hesitation ("Create first, criticize later," he writes, in his *Digital Dekalogo*). Now, sitting across me, he's laid back and chilled since scoring a short nap when I screened the rough cut of *Mondomanila*. He trims his nails as we talk at the dinner table.

Often, he garnishes his speech with the word "*wasak*."

*Wasak*, literally translated as 'shattered,' as in 'when a piece of glass is destroyed, it shatters.' Several local works – including Khavn's shorter films, Norman Wilwayco's novels and the Radioactive Sago Project's song "*Wasak na Wasak*" – have since cemented the word as a catch-all among Manila's whiskey-downing, beer-chugging, middle-class bohemian circles.

Khavn uses it to emphasize points in his narrative. *Wasak*, in a good way, means 'that is so cool in a hardcore style,' often with the second vowel drawled out. *Wasak*, in a bad way, means 'that shit is beyond fucked up.' Or, *wasak* as a verbal punctuation that serves as an exclamation of an ejaculatory and intense nature. Ergo: "*Wasak!*" Or: "*Yeah!*" It's all in the context.

With *Mondomanila* as his most expensive film to date, with operating costs clocking in at almost P1M, Khavn recounts how the road to this opus of urban decay was paved by several years of aborted attempts and directorial headaches.

**PLAYBOY:** Back in the early 2000's, news spread that a major studio was going to bankroll *Mondomanila*. Is this true?

**KHAVN:** No, Star Cinema never wanted it. No studio ever bought it. *May mga gustong bumili pero di ko na in-entertain.*

2003 *pa itong project na ito*. It never got into gear mostly because of the miscalculation of funds needed for it. Plus, it was supposed to be a good follow-up for the book that I released that same year. *Hindi na dapat tatagal yun*. Either *sabay yung launch* or *magkasunod lang*. *Hindi na dapat nalalayo*.

**PLAYBOY:** The history of this film has been a bit troubled. It's been a long time, nearly six years, since we heard that this was going to be released.

**KHAVN:** *Ang kwento n'yan, may kinuha akong production team na mga galing sa mainstream*. I did it as an experiment. *Medyo mali ata yung approach na yun eh*. *Hindi kami umabot ng shoot, pre-prod lang*. *Script lang*. *Pero at that time, hindi rin ako okay kaya buti na lang hindi rin natuloy yun*.

*Pangalawang pagkakataon, may hinahabol ata ako nung festival kaya gusto ko nang mag-shoot*. *Tipong next week, ganyan*. *Basta mabilis yun*. *A few weeks lang ata yung preparation nya*. *Yung pangalawang attempt itong version na yun na*. *2003 namin sinulat yun eh*. *Ito naman, miscasting sa cast*. *Tipong mas matanda or mas bata yung ibang characters*. *Yung nanay ni Tony mas bata sa kanya*. *Yung unano ko di marunong luminya*. *Pati yung sa crew ko, miscasting*. *Yung PD [Production Designer] ko, konyo*. *Yung PM [Production Manager] ko, utak PA [Production Assistant]*. *Yung DP [Director of Photography] ko, magaling pero tumodo ang luho*. *Rumenta ng maraming ilaw! Wasak! So, di ko na napigilan kasi bangag-bangag na ako during those days*.

*Yung pangatlo, problema naman dun, masyadong rakenrol*. *Kasi nga nagmamadali*. *Yun ang problema kapag minamadali mo, hindi ka na nakakapag-isip ng tama*. *Anyway, so, nung rumenta ng ilaw, ako naman, sige na sige na*. *Na-realize ko na lang later na napakamaling desisyon nun, kasi nga kulang-kulang sa daang libo yung nawala agad dahil lang sa lecheng ilaw*.



**PLAYBOY:** So there were several versions of the scripts at the different shooting attempts?

**KHAVN:** Actually, *may version din ako na loyal talaga dun sa novel. Talagang sakto per chapter. Parang yung Institusyon ng Makata may mga tinanggal lang akong mga sections pero essentially storya lang yun ni Tony dun sa College [of Poets]. So yung version na yun, kapag shinoot ko naman, papalo ng mahina sa limang oras.*

*Marami din akong kinausap regarding the final version of the script, pero ang issue ko nun, alin ba talaga? Yun bang loyal sa novel?*

**PLAYBOY:** There was a short film drawn from the short story where the novel originated, right? It was titled *MONDOMANILA: Institute of Poets* and starred local heartthrob Marvin Agustin.

**KHAVN:** 2004 shinoot ko yung kay Marvin [Agustin]. *Ang plano talaga nun, gumawa ng short film na parang teaser. Pero now, looking back nung late 2004-2005, pwede na palang i-shoot right then and there yung full-length. Kumbaga, magdadagdag na lang ako ng mga isang eksena. In retrospect, dapat pinag-ingay ng kaunti yung short film, makakuha ng pondo, ganyan, then shoot the full-length. Parang commercial sya, in a way.*

*Although, hindi rin naman ganun nangyari! [laughs] Wala namang taong lumapit na gustong mag-pondo. Pero alam ko at that time game na rin si Marvin na umarte sa full-length. Pero parang naghihintay pa ako nun ng jackpot na hindi rin naman dumating. Marami din namang natuwa at nawasak dun sa short film. Parang na-cite pa ata sya as one of the best films of 2005? Sa International Census of Cinema ata yun. Pero masyado din namang wasak yun. Too dark for comfort. Naalala ko may mga Kano na nakapanuod nun sa Cebu, tas first time nya pala sa Pinas. Sabi nya: totoo ba yan? Kinabahan sya eh. Nawasak.*

**PLAYBOY:** So you were really shopping for funding for the full-length feature?

**KHAVN:** *Dinala ko pa sya sa Berlinale Co-Production Market. Ang kaso nun, ako kasi ang nagpunta. Di naman ako marunong mag-pitch eh! So bale wala din. [laughs] Wala rin akong nakuhang pondo from there. May nakuha akong kaunting funds sa Rotterdam [in the Netherlands] pero ginamit ko naman sa Dot Mov nung 2005. Or was it 2008? Wasak. Di ko na maalala.*

*Tapos ginawa ko naman yung Overdose Nightmare, yung Bangungot na Bangag. Pinadala ko sa Cinemalaya. Actually, ginamit ko lang yung ibang footage ng Institusyon ng Makata, tsaka yung nag-shoot ako ng extrang isang araw? Yung mga na-abort na footage. Ito yung araw na nagrenta ng sobrang mahal na ilaw. Actually, simula pa lang ng araw na yun, alam ko nang walang kahihiinatnan. Sa Escopa ko yun shinoot. Hindi na nga sya bad feeling, kahit common sense lang, mukhang wala talagang mangyayari. [laughs] Actually, naisip ko, kahit ganun kawasak, aandar pa rin ata sya.*

**PLAYBOY:** Wow, sounds like you sank a lot of finances into this one!

**KHAVN:** *Ito yung pinakamagastos kong film! Maliban pa man dun sa mga na-abort na attempts. Tawag ko sa kanila, 'Mondo-Aborto.'* [laughs] *Mga one million inabot nito.*

*“Ito yung pinakamagastos kong film! Maliban pa man dun sa mga na-abort na attempts. Tawag ko sa kanila, ‘Mondo-Aborto.’”*

**PLAYBOY:** Why did you get Timothy Mabalot for the lead role of Tony, and not Marvin Agustin?

**KHAVN:** *Gusto ko talaga bata, kaya di ko na kinuha si Marvin. Kasi nga 16 or 17 ata sya sa nobela? Yung isang Mondo-Aborto, ang bida ko dun si Von Reyes eh, early 30s ata sya dun eh. Itong bata na Tony si Timothy Mabale. Nag-nominee sa Urian. Galing sa Philippine High School for the Arts.*

**PLAYBOY:** How was it during the shoot itself? It must have been a huge crew and cast. Bigger than you're used to.

**KHAVN:** *Yung five-day shoot, madugo. Nag-break kami nung gitna, kaso, nag-shoot rin kami nung araw na yun. [laughs] Nung last day, hindi pa talaga natapos kasi nagpunta pa kami ng Batangas para dun sa beach scene. Yung bridge scene sa Quiapo yun. Yung slums sa may Agham [Road] yun. Malaki yun, mehn. Wasak sa loob. Meron din kaming shinoot sa Malabon. Madugo kasi madaming cast, madaming crew. At oo, may mga prima-donna shit na wasak. Sakit ng ulo ko ng araw na yun. Tsaka syempre nagmamadali. Pero kung relaxed kami, dapat siguro seven days lahat. Pero tight kasi yung sked. Pero dapat naka-stretch yun lahat sa seven days, tsaka di dapat araw-araw.*

**PLAYBOY:** What were the creative problems you encountered in adapting the novel to screen?

**KHAVN:** *Naisip ko yung Trainspotting kasi dun sa translation nung nobela sa pelikula. Andami kasi nawalang eksena, may mga pinaghalong shit. Pero instead of playing the novel's game, dinala ko na lang sa ibang playing field na mas gamay ko. Kung saan pwede kong mas akin. Kapag kasi naging loyal ka dun sa novel, literally, ang hrap nang gumalaw. Ang nangyari, kinuha ko lang yung essence tapos dinala ko sa lupa ko, ika nga. Pwede na kong magkalat ngayon mula sa casting hanggang sa mga eksena. Wala sya dun sa novel pero loyal pa rin sa spirit. In contrast dun sa mga nauna, tulad dun sa very first na script, super loyal yun pero wala talagang spirit.*

**PLAYBOY:** What are your plans or schedule for the release of *Mondomanila*?

**KHAVN:** *Balak ko, international premiere muna. Mga middle of 2010. Earliest February, latest September. Locally siguro, mga plus one month. Basta definitely 2010. Balak ko rin pala, may promo soundtrack. Kukuha sana ako ng mga celebrities and big-name musicians to interpret the songs I wrote for the movie. May relaunch din yung libro in 2010. Basta, dapat wasak!*







# LAX

Friday November 6, 2009

## JOEL MADDEN

DJ SET

A BENEFIT EVENT FOR THE TYPHOON VICTIMS

PCSO DC SHOES VELVET CHANNEL



Hollywood rock celebrity Joel Madden a.k.a lead singer of Good Charlotte, a.k.a Nicole Richie's man, made a special appearance at LAX the Nightclub in Manila. He performed an exclusive DJ set to a wild and crazy jam-packed LAX crowd.

Entrance lines went all the way to the next building and the dance floor was overloaded. But everyone lucky enough to experience the rare performance had more than an awesome time. Joel treated everyone by DJ-ing for over 3 hours, more than expected. The party and energy was non-stop and all the guests in attendance had a great time, including Joel as he tweeted the following day: "LAX went off last night. I had a great time. Thanks to everyone who came out. I swear LAX over here in Manila is one of my fav clubs i've ever Spun at."

LAX the Nightclub would like to thank everyone who donated goods that night for the typhoon victims. Please continue donating goods such as clothing, blankets, toys, canned goods, bottled waters, shoes, and slippers at LAX and get a chance to receive a rare Joel Madden at LAX Manila mini-event poster that Joel personally signed.

Thanks also to all our partners that made Joel Madden @ LAX the Nightclub, Manila possible: PCSO, DC shoes, Velvet Channel, ETC, Philippines STAR, Manila Bulletin, New World Makati, MAX 103.5 and Wave 89.1.

Check out LAX the Nightclub's YouTube Channel for footage from the evening, at:  
[www.youtube.com/user/LAXNightclubManila](http://www.youtube.com/user/LAXNightclubManila)  
[LAXManila.Ph](http://LAXManila.Ph)

Photos by Aaron Co. & [www.djaryanmagat.com](http://www.djaryanmagat.com)





# Showdown in the Desert





**The largest Aston Martin of the new millennium has four doors and four seats, though it's not obvious. Here's an exclusive encounter with a sedan that camouflages itself as a Coupé.**

**By Michael Görmann**





**W**hen Marek Reichman started his job in 2005 as a design director with Aston Martin, his boss attacked him with a special request. "Draw me the most beautiful sedan in the world," ordered Ulrich Bez. The German managing director had very big ideas for the brand, literally. He wanted to build the largest Aston Martin of the new millennium, with four doors and four seats, but still with the elegant alignment of a typical Aston Martin. It would be an emulation of a Coupé-sedan.

This was a tempting task for Reichmann, as he had recently done just the opposite. Thanks to his efforts, another icon for a different automotive manufacturer came out: the Rolls-Royce Phantom.

In January 2006, Reichman completed his assignment from Bez. The result came to light at the Detroit Motor Show: the Aston Martin Rapide – a car so skillfully made that at first sight, one does not notice that it has four doors. But hardly anyone counts on a quantity production of this kind. The unanimous opinion: it was a show car, not a production model – what would become of it?

Scene change: July 2009, Kuwait, midday, 54 degrees Celsius. Over an endlessly long, dead-straight desert road in the direction of Saudi Arabia races a white Coupé with a speed of 200mph. It leaves an impressive trail of sand and heat behind itself.

The Rapide was finished, and it looked nearly as accurate as its prototype in Detroit. **PLAYBOY** got an exclusive preview two months before its premiere at the world's largest motor show: the IAA in Frankfurt.



Kuwait is ideal for heat tests. The white Rapide is one of the 14 so-called VPs, which stands for 'verification prototype.' This almost production-line version was not built in the British Gaydon, but at Magna Steyr in the Austrian city Graz, where all production-line Rapides will be built.

The white giant stood for two hours in the midday heat; its interior was an oven. Engineer Simon Barnes stepped heavily on the gas pedal and drove straight through the desert, with closed windows. He perspired briefly, but the two air conditioning systems readily proved that they could cool down the interior in a few minutes to a bearable 20 degrees Celsius.

The dual air conditioning systems are a novelty for Aston Martin. The rear seats require centrally placed additional auxiliary radiators, and are the reason for the huge center console.

This seat arrangement is a surprisingly comfortable one for the Rapide's passengers. They sit in a closely cut cockpit and have two individual flat screens positioned before them. In addition, the Rapide has an integrated entertainment system that makes it pleasantly difficult to choose which media to play: would you rather have music or video from the six-disc DVD changer in the trunk, an iPod, a mobile phone or a PSP? Everything is merged into the system.



### Aston Martin Rapide

Weight: **1950 kg\***  
 Sprint 0-100 km/h: **5,4 s\***  
 V-max: **305 km/h\***  
 Cylinder: **V12**  
 Capacity: **5935 ccm**  
 Achievement: 470 HP  
 Torque: **600 Nm**  
 Weight per horsepower: **4,15 kg/PS\***  
 Price: **around 175,000 Euros \***

\*Development target



When the Rapide stretches all four doors to the sky, the whole extravaganza of the design reveals itself. Which sedan has four wing doors? Four racing seats? With the view through the opened rear flap, the seating looks particularly fascinating.

Neither the Porsche Panamera nor the Maserati Quattroporte are real competitors for this car. It stands in its own league. Aside from the fact that the Rapide costs nearly double than the basic Porsche, it has the same width (193cm), is six centimeters flatter (136cm) and five centimeters longer (502cm) – it is effectively a sumptuously equipped family carriage inside a classy sport suit. The brand wants to offer a beautiful car that is suitable for everyone: even those who have a family or who occasionally travel with more than one business partner.

Aston Martin management has already taken the experimental Rapide out for a spin of their own. CEO Bez took three directors from his executive floor in Gaydon and drove with them for two straight days through Europe – from the Nürburgring, to the Alps up to the

Großglockner, and finally to Graz. “As [Bez] stepped out, I was already palpating,” said Simon Barnes, who served as the chief engineer during the entire Rapide development. “However, he just grinned broadly.”

It is with a mixture of respect and self-doubt that the people at Aston Martin face their CEO. The always elegant 65-year-old has already contributed many great things to the automobile industry: none of his engineers would dare try to get anything past him. Bez is the father of the BMW Z1 and the latest water-cooled Porsche 911 (series 993).

During the test trip, it was the boss himself who noticed something crucial. Although the entire Rapide was based on the platform of the DB9, Bez decided he wanted to build the rear axle differential based on the sportier DBS. This clearly gives the Rapide more steam in the middle speed range without taking much from the maximum speed. Where did Bez get this idea? It dawned on him as he encountered trouble on the German highways driving past competitor sedans.



**Simon Barnes** is the chief engineer behind the development of the Aston Martin Rapide, and is also on the front lines as one of the hands-on test drivers of the impressive hybrid-design vehicle.

The decision to use a DBS differential came as a convenient turn of events for Simon Barnes. During a traffic light race, he faced off against a Mercedes SL. “He caught me on the wrong foot the first time, but I won the next two races.”

Traffic light races are very popular in Kuwait. The so-called ‘Traffic Light Grand Prix’ is an important reason behind Barnes’ choice of Kuwait for all the heat tests. After all, a good chunk of customers sit at the gulf – and they kill time with a full gas tank and ready brakes. In addition, it is 55 degrees Celsius in the shade, at a place where there actually is no shade. An Aston Martin must be able to stand this.

The Englishmen want to sell 1500 Rapides per year worldwide, financial crisis notwithstanding. At the end of March 2010, the first one will be delivered.

Simon Barnes and his team still have a lot of things to do before then, though. He still has to complete various hot rounds on the north loop. Afterwards, he has to ascend to the ‘Hot European Environmental Test’: through the Alps, over the Stelvio Pass, and finally on the high-speed oval in the Italian Nardo.

And what about Marek Reichman, Aston Martin’s director of design? He’s already hard at work on the next unusual task, kept carefully under wraps. His boss says: “Aston Martin exists in order to invent the new.”



## PORSCHE **The Big Brother**



**The competitor that isn’t: the Panamera is also both a Coupé and a sedan.**



**P**orsche already presented the Panamera earlier in the year: an experimental design that followed a philosophy similar to the Rapide’s. The car was to incorporate enough space for four persons while still maintaining the agility of a sports car: a seemingly impossible proposition. Porsche did succeed, but not without external aesthetic cost: mockers call the Panamera the 911 Stretch Limousine.

However, denigration aside: the lucky driver at the wheel of the Panamera, provided he doesn’t look through the rearview mirror at the extended frame of his vehicle, might actually think he’s sitting in a classic sport-design 911. The

1.8-ton giant is agile enough in motion to convey that feeling of control even on angular roads. In turn, if you happen to look inside the trunk, you’re likely to assume that it’s a full-grown sedan in front of you rather than an impressive hybrid.

The seats of the Panamera are admittedly much more comfortable than those of the Rapide. Also, in the rear seats, one enjoys plenty of luxury when sitting alone.

There is icing on the cake: the optional music player of respected audio brand Burmester. It converts the Panamera into a veritable concert hall: luxurious listening on wheels.





# The **Women** behind the **Camera** of **Erotica**

By Ana Santos



W

ith a clear vision of what erotica should be, the balls to challenge norms, and unquestionable talent, women have somewhat turned the tables on the porn industry – by taking a position behind the camera, instead of in front of it.

According to the Berlin Porn Film Festival's website: "The submissions to this year's Porn Film Festival showed that there are more and more women creating films around female sexuality, lust or fetish."

PLAYBOY caught up with two 'Chicks with Guts' – Anna Brownfield and Anna Span – who were both at the recently concluded Berlin Porn Film Festival, and talked to them about their role in changing an industry that was not only dominated by men, but also served to satisfy only male lustful desires.

## Anna Brownfield

**Homebase:** Australia

**Film companies:** Poison Apple Productions, Hungry Films

**Credentials:** Graduate of Media Arts from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, with Honors; Lecturer in Multimedia Design and Film, TV and Art at Melbourne's Swinburne University

Brownfield's work has been shown at numerous international festivals and conferences, such as the 1995 International Women's Conference in Beijing. Her first film feature, *The Money Shot*, closed the Melbourne Underground Film Festival and won Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Male Lead.

She is the creator of adult films she calls "new wave erotica," a term she coined to differentiate her work from regular porn.

**Trademarks of her work:** Natural, "untouched by a knife" bodies preferred (and that includes boob jobs), and believable scenes where importance is placed on the chemistry between the characters and build-up to the actual sex scenes.

"I'm a feminist erotic filmmaker who makes films about sex and craft!" shouts Anna Brownfield's Skype profile.

Explaining the "feminist" element that may otherwise appear to be misplaced in that declaration, Brownfield says: "Most porn is made for heterosexual men and from their point of view of sex and sexuality. Men, for example, are never penetrated in a porn film – they are never fucked up the ass even by a woman with a strap-on. They don't know what it is like to be penetrated. Porn out there is not made to simulate women. On another note, I don't really consider myself to be working in the adult film industry, as in Australia there isn't really one, so I consider myself to be a feminist erotic filmmaker who happens to make films that contain explicit sex," adds Brownfield.

Producing, writing and directing erotica was a natural

progression for Brownfield. "As majority of the products are from a male perspective, I saw the potential in tapping into a growing market of making non-formulaic porn that is designed to stimulate and arouse women from a truly female perspective."

With this as a guiding principle, Brownfield's work pushes the boundaries and redefines the depiction of sex and nudity in cinema.

Her second feature, *The Band*, has screened at Cannes Film Market (France), and was the opening night film at the Berlin Porn Film Festival (German). It has sold to numerous territories around the world.

"The script for *The Band* came out of stories I collected while working as a 'door bitch' in a local rock 'n' roll venue here in Melbourne, called The Tote. I took most of these stories and wove them into the script. Of course, there is always some creative license, and to protect the guilty I will never reveal which bands they are actually about," laughs Brownfield.

## Keeping It Real

Production for *The Band* involved much the same processes as directing any other movie, says Brownfield. However, keeping to her all-natural trademark proved to be a difficulty in the casting department.

"Casting was one of the most difficult things," relates Brownfield. "We needed actors who were prepared to do real sex scenes and who had also had acting experience. We held auditions like a normal film and got the actors to learn a piece from the film before they came to perform it for us. I was concerned less about anatomical endowments and more about their ability to act, because once they can do that, taking your clothes off is easy!"

Finding the men wasn't as difficult as finding women who were willing to be in an adult film that catered to their female fantasies.

"It was harder to find women [for the film] because I feel it is still a big taboo for women to perform sexually and be in control of their own bodies."

Brownfield was insistent on keeping it real, even when it came right down to choosing body types. "We wanted a variety of women's bodies to be represented, rather than the homogenized, surgically enhanced bodies we see in American adult movies, so fake breasts were definitely not welcome!"

## A Woman's Touch

"I think it's important when shooting erotica to create your own language and challenge the clichés of the adult film genre and focus on women's fantasies," says Brownfield when asked how having a woman behind the camera shifts the paradigm that "the same old porn" has been locked into.

"I like to objectify the male body, whereas most adult films objectify the female body.

I wanted to break from the usual way that adult films are shot.



“

**With regards to directing, one of the questions I always get asked is, ‘Do you get turned on while shooting sex scenes?’**

”



Director Anna Brownfield and Brianna Heart being silly on set.

For instance, I focus more on the fact that a hand traveling down a body can be just as sensual and erotic. I wanted to play up the sense of mystery when you didn't always see everything."

### **Occupational Hazards**

"With regards to directing, one of the questions I always get asked is, 'Do you get turned on while shooting sex scenes?'" Brownfield says candidly, sharing the more fun part of her job.

"While shooting a scene, I am watching it through a monitor and wondering if I am getting all the shots I need, and how the performances are. The fact people are having sex is quite secondary to the whole experience," she starts to say, before confessing: "However, I do remember during one scene I looked up from the monitor and one of the actors was looking directly at me while he had sex with his co-star. For a brief moment, it hit me that there were people having sex in front of me, but after that I returned to my monitor and made sure I was getting what I needed."

As for her male actors keeping [it] up on the set, Brownfield says she has seen everything, from the actors who have no trouble at all, to using medical options, to: "On one particular day, our stills photographer offered to be a fluffer for one of the actors!"

### **Porn Promoting Safe Sex**

Turning to a more serious topic, Brownfield talks about the rise in sexually transmitted diseases in Australia, among 16- to 25-year-olds: an age group that has grown up without thinking of AIDS as a death sentence.

"This generation thinks you should use condoms for contraception only, and doesn't think about it also protecting them from sexually transmitted diseases. Hence, I see one of my roles as an erotic film maker is also to educate the audience about safe sex."

Safe sex is a mandatory element in an Anna Brownfield film. Brownfield pays attention to relating the need for safe sex in



DOP Sanne Kunz shooting a scene from *The Band*.

relation to the storyline.

"As most of the sex scenes in *The Band* are one-night stands, where the characters don't know each other's sexual history, it was important to show condom use. Not only just during the sex scenes, but also the condoms being put on, rather than just appearing."

Some in the porn industry, and even viewers, would think that such consistent use of condoms in the film would make the film less marketable and appealing. But Brownfield remains adamant. "I feel that the sex scenes are so erotic that it doesn't matter if they use condoms. Also I really don't care as it was one thing I am not prepared to compromise on."

To further prove her point about latex not getting in erotica's way, Brownfield shares her own experience. "I wasn't in a relationship when I made *The Band*, and had decided that I would remain celibate during the film. Let's just say after the first week of filming, I broke that promise!"



## Anna Span

**Hometown:** Kent, United Kingdom

**Credentials:** Graduate of Fine Arts (Film & Video) from Central St. Martins, London

Span recently completed an MA in Philosophy from Birkbeck College.

She has several years' experience making professional quality porn films for Television X and The Adult Channel.

**Accolades:** UK Best Director: UK Adult Film and TV Awards, 2008 and 2009; UK's first female porn director

**Trademarks of her work:** Soap-opera storylines with explicit sex scenes added, realistic casting, and a female point of view: a lot of shots are devoted to men as givers of pleasure rather than just recipients.



Director Anna Span

Anna Span was originally anti-porn. She detested the fact that porn was mostly a male field, where men were kings and "the women were subjugated as mere pleasure objects."

While walking down the red light district in Soho, she came to terms with this industry that she spurned, and realized that she was really just jealous of the fact that an entire industry was devoted to satisfying the prurient fantasies of men. More than that, Span was angry that there was a blatant denial of women's own sexuality. "Women have the same desires for pleasure and have just as much right as a man to satisfy her fantasies," Span says.

"I believe that to sexually objectify – that is, to fleetingly view a person's sexual attractiveness separately from their personality/person – is a natural human experience, and NOT just a male one, as has been traditionally depicted," Span says, elaborating.

Since then, Span has changed her view on the porn industry and took on a different perspective: that porn is an excellent genre and that it is one of the last underdeveloped/unexplored areas left in film.

As a film student in Central St. Martin, she wrote a dissertation entitled "Towards a New Pornography," in which she studied the probable elements of a "female perspective of porn."

### From Cutting up Scenes to Filming Her Own

After graduating from film school, Span began work as a full-time editor on Television X (formerly The Fantasy Channel), a series of adult television channels. Span watched several hundred porn films and programmes, being the one to make the censorious legal cuts. On the side, she was also experimenting with filming her own short films.

"That's 35 hours a week of watching porn. I was also shooting my own films during the weekend. I managed to keep my sanity, but barely," says Span.

This experience proved to be invaluable for Span, who learned the ins and outs of legality in porn. Later, she would use her acquired expertise to define her own brand of pornography. "I learned the exact point at which a shot becomes illegal and used knowledge of these guidelines to make my softcore films

“

**That's 35 hours a week of watching porn. I was also shooting my own films during the weekend. I managed to keep my sanity, but barely.**

”



as hard as the guidelines would allow.”

“I originally decided to focus on developing my skills in the softcore area, where there was a definite market. But this knowledge eventually came in handy when I eventually started shooting hardcore porn as well,” adds Span.

Span’s first commercially released programme, *Eat Me/Keep Me*, was an immediate success. The story focused on the stripping experience of Nadia and Majella, who posed as two art school friends of Span’s. The film was an immediate success, and Span soon began filming sequels that eventually went on to become an *Eat Me/Keep Me* series.

Since then, Span has become a major force in porn. Her presence in the adult film industry goes beyond the scenes that she has filmed, which easily number higher than 250. Span has also started her own production outfit called Easy on the Eye Productions, where she trains other female adult filmmakers in their craft.

In her book, *Shoot Your Own Adult Movies*, Span shows couples how to make the camera your favorite sex toy with what she promises is a “step-by-step guide to fulfilling your fantasies of becoming a porn star.”

### Hands-on

Despite the entire porn enterprise that she has built on her name and website (annaspansdiary.com), Span remains involved when it comes to production.

“I write all the scenarios myself. In list form, no script,” says Span, who, despite the numerous titles that she now has under her belt, continues to draw inspiration from everyday things.

“I write all of the scenarios myself. They come from real life, usually. For instance, if I find an amazing location, I will write

a DVD about it. Sometimes I am inspired by just one person I see. I once saw a woman selling fruit in a market and liked her hands, so I wrote *Pound a Punnet*: a film about women who work in market stalls.”

Asked about her own formula for creating films targeted at women’s sensuality, Span pragmatically enumerates:

- No porn-looking actors and actresses.
- Make it look as real as possible.
- There should be oral sex scenes where the woman is receiving and enjoying it.
- Play up female fantasies with men from the service industries.

As for the male actors, how they are picked does have some basis in what female audiences want to see: a decent size. Men have to be well-endowed to satisfy the female viewer, but Span cites another reason for this: “Men must have big enough cocks, or you can’t get the camera angles.”

On staying power for the men and it being a hard job: “Guys either can or can’t do it. The ones that can thrive, they occasionally use Viagra, but you can’t base a career on Viagra. You eventually need to ejaculate, and Viagra often delays this,” Span rationalizes.

### Proving that Female Ejaculation Exists

Proving that porn shouldn’t remain a man’s pleasure, Span recently won a historic victory with her *Women Love Porn* DVD, which includes a woman clearly ejaculating.

Originally, the British Board of Film Classification asked for compulsory edits to remove the female ejaculation section, as they believed the woman to be urinating and argued that it was in violation of the Obscene Publications Act.

Span presented irrefutable scientific evidence in support of the model’s ability to ‘squirt,’ as it is known in the adult industry. Span explains: “I am really proud to have the film passed and to have made a difference for women who experience this in their own lives. It was never fair that their orgasms were dismissed as urinary incontinence.”

And with the same determination that got her started in this business, Span continues to fight for the right of women to have their own kind of porn and their own ejaculation as well.



A scene from Brownfield's *The Band*.



Director Anna Span on the set of *Be My Boy Toy 2*.



# PLEASURABLE SAFE SEX: Producing Safe Erotica

**B**rownfield and Span both talk about showing condom usage in their movies, but porn fans may wonder: is it really possible to have an adult film with safe sex that doesn't lose out on the erotica?

PLAYBOY speaks with two women who not only think it's entirely possible – they've gone ahead and done it.

"I think we [the public health sector] could learn a thing or two from the marketing and creative industries, who can just about sell anything by using allusions to sex. Think about the loads and loads of products that you have in your home – coffee, ice cream – that use sex to promote them. In order to sell safe sex, safe sex should be sold on sexiness and not on getting a disease," says safe-sex activist Anne Philpott.

This insight propelled Philpott to put up The Pleasure Project, a UK-based educational, advocacy and research initiative that promotes safer sex that is also pleasurable.

Philpott's insights are supported by what she calls an 'a-ha!' moment during an AIDS conference in Barcelona. "The speaker was talking about an 'insertive probe' and a 'receptive cavity,' and I realized that he was actually talking about the penis and the vagina! The study of sex is getting so clinical, as if safe sex and pleasure are mutually exclusive, when in fact, they are not." Philpott stands firm on the belief that the best way to get people to use condoms consistently is to eroticize them.

Philpott has written a number of articles and research studies on the same topic for *The Lancet*, one of the world's leading general medical journals, and has gone a step higher by going onto the set of adult films as a safe-sex consultant. Philpott oversees the introduction of condoms into the sex scene and ensures proper usage is shown. Of course, she also ensures that the sexiness of using a condom is not lost under all the steamy action. "There can be a lot of erotic things about a condom in a sex scene – the sound of the wrapper being torn open, the way that the couple looks at each other as it's being put on."

"Most people get their sex education by watching porn," Philpott admits. "We're kidding ourselves if we think that they don't." Given this truism, how better to educate viewers about safe sex than to clearly but subtly present it in porn?

When Suzanne Noble, an entrepreneur who once ran a website called Fucktheshop.com selling adult toys and sexy clothes, met Philpott at a Sexual Freedom Coalition conference, she knew that the concept of safe pleasurable sex could not only

be taught: it could be artistically demonstrated on film.

"The adult industry has been very slow to catch on to the idea of making safe sex sexy, and so immediately upon meeting Anne, I thought that we could really do something together that would be positive and empowering," relates Noble.

That something turned out to be *Modern Loving*, an entirely safer-sex, sexy film that featured actual couples and individual women enjoying a wide variety of great sex – all with condoms.

*Modern Loving* is considered the first erotic instructional video for heterosexual couples that features safer sex without being preachy or unsexy. Philpott and Noble were clear on their objective not to make the movie look like a public service announcement for safe sex.

"We didn't want our movie to be prescriptive. We wanted to show real couples enjoying sex and sharing with our audience what made their sex life so fabulous." Noble goes on to share the difficulty this casting requirement entailed: "Casting was extraordinarily difficult because we wanted to show real couples. It took me a very long time to find people who were willing to have sex in front of the camera. In the end, we found most of them through various magazine and newspaper stories that I ran, and also through an adult agency that had a few real couples on their books. The people that had never acted in front of the camera before were ultimately the best because they looked very natural. We weren't looking for perfect bodies or guys with big cocks. We just wanted everyone to look as real and natural as possible."

"We approached the making of modern loving as complete professionals. We had a shooting script, a shot list and used 3-cameras throughout. Our production costs were well over 100,000 British pounds, whereas the average porn movie outside Hollywood would probably come in at less than a quarter of that," Noble explains.

Both ladies agree that being on a porn set is a lot less glamorous than it sounds. "It's hard!" says Philpott, pertaining to the task of performing in front of at least 30 people. "The studio is cold, and you have to be able to get started and then stop when they yell cut."

"For the male actors, it is quite challenging to stay hard while being directed and having to move from setup to setup. Our actors were all couples, so we were dealing with people who were used to being intimate with each other. I think it would have been much easier to direct a porn movie than a sexy safe-sex education film," muses Noble, who recalls the times when male actors would lose their erections.

"I got used to talking to naked men while they were wanking! That was the funniest part of the whole thing."



Check out [www.modernloving.com](http://www.modernloving.com) and download the movie, or log on to [www.thepleasureproject.org](http://www.thepleasureproject.org) for more sexy tips on how to make your sex life erotic, pleasurable and safe.







# The Kobayashi Maru of Love

EXCERPTS FROM THE FORTHCOMING BOOK

WORDS BY CARL JAVIER • ILLUSTRATIONS BY CAROLINE DY

## It's Hard to Get a Girl in the Comic Book Section

After a bad break-up, I had been having trouble meeting people. I hadn't expected the break-up, and had actually felt settled and did not expect that I would ever have to date again. So, I put the blinders on and generally avoided women who might serve as a temptation. Couple that behavior with the general awkwardness that I have in meeting new people, and the chances of me generating date possibilities on my own were about the same as Superman staying dead for long.

My friend Tinka, fully aware of this lack of meeting-women-skills of mine, decided to take me to the bookstore on a Saturday afternoon. I almost had a date, or some lesser equivalent of one (I was looking for somebody to go to Timezone with), but it didn't push through. Tinka picked me up and we drove to The Fort.

Outside the Fully Booked building, I saw the banners and streamers and other things screaming that everything in the store was on sale. I thought, perfect! Tinka has brought me here so that I can buy comic books and forget my trouble with women by losing myself in literature, art, science, and other high-minded things.

"Now's our chance," Tinka said.

"Chance for what?" I asked, mulling over a discounted Chuck Klosterman book.

"These books will attract women."

"Uh-huh."

"And you'll be here when these women come."

"Yeah."

"So you will be in a perfect striking position when the women arrive. You're here, you're in a bookstore—"

"And I'm a book nerd! Yes! It's the perfect place for me to meet women."

"Yeah, it's like going to a club, but with lots of books."

"And I can filter through the girls, not only by looks,

but by the kind of books that they like. What they like will define what they are like, so I can tell which ones I should talk to."

"Exactly!"

The plan seemed, foolproof, brilliant. I was sure to catch somebody in the bookstore. But, as is also the case with most military strategies, the planning is perfect but the execution always goes wonky.

The first mistake was mine, of course. Despite knowing that the primary objective was trying to talk to women and the lesser objectives involved finding cheap books and exploring the store, I failed to keep my eyes on the prize. As soon as Tinka and I had finished discussing the plan, I went to the comic book/graphic novel section. There were lots of people, but the only female there as I was browsing was Tinka. The rest were males in their late teens to early thirties, wearing glasses and geek attire. It's a sad stereotyping of the people who read comic books, but the stereotype does come from somewhere.

We picked out some seminal *Batman* titles for Tinka, and I picked up a *Runaways* hardbound. Another strategically wrong maneuver was picking up that HB. From that point on I would be carrying a comic book throughout the store, nixing my chances with girls who looked down on guys who read comic books. I know that I wouldn't want to wind up with someone like that, but when you're trying to meet people and it's a game of probabilities, you want to have as many options as possible.

In another wrong move, we went from comic books to sci-fi and fantasy. I know it seems dishonest, but in much the same way that on first dates women don't eat as much as they really do, or don't show their respective crazinesses until you're already in a relationship with them, I got to thinking that I should hide my sci-fi/comic book/*Star Wars*/and-the-list-goes-on fanaticism at the onset. Of course, knowing that you should hide the geekiness, and actually being able to hide the geekiness, are two different things.



As I was looking at the sci-fi books, Tinka ran over to me, excited and calling me over.

"You have to see this!"

"What?"

And we ran over to the toy section. Her jaw dropped as she pointed at a Superman cape that had its own specialized kind of hanger.

"Oh my god, look at it," she said. Neither of us were really big Superman fans, but seeing the cape hanging there, and imagining it hanging in our homes, was an overwhelming thing.

"Whoa."

"Just don't look at the price," she said. "Just enjoy it."

"I know, it's frakking awesome." And just as I expressed my total awe at the Superman cape, and used that inevitably geeky expletive, *frak*, a pretty girl walked from behind the cape and past us. I know, it's wrong when I notice a Superman replica cape more than a pretty girl. And this girl knew it too, as she gave us a weird look.

It was then that we decided to dig ourselves out of the geek basement and head up to the higher floors, where, hopefully, I would have better chances of talking to women. Tinka said that I should practice my spiel. We had figured that since I was already a published author with a book out, that I could use that to my advantage with girls who like books.

"Let's go over it again. What do you do?"

"I sidle up to the girl and check what book she's holding or looking at."

"Right. Then?"

"Then I say, hey you like blank blank author too? Wow, he's a major influence on me."

"And then you wait for her to ask what you mean."

"And then I say, 'Yes, he's influenced my writing. I'm an author myself.' Then I talk some more bullshit about whichever author that is, and get her number."

There was a lot of confidence here, as I have a pretty extensive reading background, and the rest of the authors that people were reading I could probably bullshit my way through.

But as we wandered the store, we found that there weren't many people, and all the pretty girls were draped around other men's arms. I checked the time, and realized that we were much too early for anything. It was around four, and the store would start filling up with people getting ready to gimmick and hang out at around six. Despite our elaborate planning and meticulous practice of my authorial pick-up lines, there just wasn't anyone to use it on.

I decided to abort the mission so that we could reassess our situation and possibly formulate a better battle plan against my being single. The strategy seemed sound, but we failed to consider the variables, which is always the downfall of such things. I went to the counter and paid for my *Runaways* hardbound. Then as Tinka and I left we tried to think of other possible plans outside of the bookstore.

## Comicon and a Double Date Gone Wrong

I had been pestering my friends Lotte and Bong to find me a date for our *G.I. Joe* geek day out so that I wouldn't be a third wheel. Lotte I had known for years, Bong I had met only recently at a party at Lotte's house. At the party we discussed the strengths and weaknesses of Soresu (Form III), Ataru (Form IV), and Shien/Djem So (Form V), just in case we were ever caught in a lightsaber duel, while Lotte fell asleep on us. It was the start of a beautiful bromance.



They had been helping me through the break-up, and one night over beer I told them that I would be performing with my band at the upcoming comic convention. They said it would be a perfect day to indulge in my geekiness. We would hit the convention and then watch *G.I. Joe* together. Sounded like a good idea to me, there was the unlikely but still existent chance that I might meet a pretty female of parallel geekhood at the convention (fat chance, I know, but I'm a big fan of glimmers of hope) and they would try and bring me a date, if not a whole *barkada* of single women (such is the hope that I allow to exist in my heart).

We had an early call time and had to be there by ten in the morning. I was the first of the band to arrive, and I took the opportunity to wander the Megatrade Hall, which served as a venue for the convention. Weirdly enough, it looked more like a toy convention with some comics thrown in, as toys and sculptures and busts and all these other things occupied the middle of the convention area, while the comics were off to a side and the indie comics creators were thrown to a far corner wall, as if they were being kept as far away from the stage as possible.

The organizers had us play our set at 11:30, and there were hardly any people. We went through a few songs that were generally ignored, packed up our stuff, and left the stage. Then I got a text from Lotte that they would be running late, had a family lunch, so I would have to wander the halls waiting for them, braving the incoming droves of cosplayers.

Rather than getting turned on and chasing after these women in tights, I became frightened more than anything. Don't get me wrong, if a girl likes to get kinky and wants to dress up in costume, I'm adaptable. But I'm not sure if it was a matter of volume, just the sheer number of all these people dressed up, this feeling that I was underdressed because I was just wearing a Pac-Man shirt and jeans, or if there was an actual scariness in all of these people in costume. All I know is that while the sensible person might have gotten some phone numbers out of the situation, I cowered in a corner.

Kate, a friend who was teaching at UP the same time that I was, arrived with her teenaged brother. He scoped out the convention, dove into the crowd, and emerged with a girl





who he disappeared to a corner with. I, on the other hand, stood in a corner near the entrance with Kate, wondering how I could emerge with the same. Kate and I made a pass through the crowd, but all I emerged with was some indie comics under my arm. Later, Jessel, another friend from the UP faculty, accompanied me as I made another pass through the crowd, but we wound up spending more time talking about comics and putting our heads in containers rummaging through singles than making contact with the scantily clad cosplayers.

I found myself stuck in between of costumed girls as I was trying to find Kate near the entrance. I saw a pretty one and tried smiling at her. I wasn't sure who she was dressed up as, because of my limited anime knowledge, but she was in tight black leather that revealed her sides and a good amount of cleavage, boots, and a cape. She smiled back at me, so I tried to approach her. Then she swooshed her cape and roared at me. I have enough problems figuring out how to talk to women, so when the girl roared at me I wasn't sure how to respond, so I responded by sidestepping, then walking briskly back to the entrance area.

Kate had warned me earlier that most of the girls might be "in character" if I tried talking to them, but I had forgotten that. I suppose, or I can only hope, that I was being roared at as part of character, and not as the response that I should expect from women when I try smiling at them.

Lotte and Bong arrived a short while after, and we headed off to the theater where we would meet their friend. The friend wasn't exactly my type. Given that physically I'm no big catch, but I've established a pattern for girlfriends, and the girl didn't fit the pattern. Nonetheless, I thought, hey, let's give it a shot; who knows, maybe her personality will blow me away.

When the four of us went into the theater, we picked out relatively good seats. We were surprised that not too many people were watching. Without talking about it, Bong and I sat next to each other. Then Lotte said, "I think I'm supposed to sit next to my boyfriend."

"Oh, right," I said and so Bong and my date switched seats.

"Try not to miss each other too much," Lotte said.

"I'll try," I said, as my date settled in next to me. So, I

was the furthest left, then my date, Lotte to her right, and Bong furthest right. A trailer came on for a big upcoming sci-fi movie, and Bong and I blurted out at the same time, "My God!" Then we looked at each other, across the two women between us, and we were both probably thinking of all these sci-fi things to say to each other.

"Oh my God! Look at how you guys are looking at each other!"

"What?" I said, "There's no looking."

"You two are looking at each other longingly." She turned to Bong, and he shrugged.

"I have no idea what you're talking about. I'm here watching the trailers," I said.

"Carl!"

I smiled at my date, tried asking her about the trailers, but there just wasn't any chemistry. Another sci-fi movie trailer came on, and just as my gaze wandered in Bong's direction, Lotte caught me. "You two," she said in a tone of near-defeat, then she just let out a sigh.

"You guys should go out on a date together." Bong and I smiled at each other when she said that, and Lotte just looked at us in dismay. "Carl, stop trying to steal my boyfriend!"

"Sorry, Lotte, but he's mine now. You're just getting in the way," I said, as the opening credits started to roll. I realize that the last statement can be pretty funny, or at least it was funny when I said it, but in hindsight I suppose that pretty much destroyed any chances with my date. I'd shown her how I was more interested in talking about sci-fi trailers with another dude than putting the moves on her. We sat through the movie, and every once in a while my date would lean over and talk to Lotte, asking *G.I. Joe*-related questions, and Bong and I would answer them as best we could.

After the movie was dinner at a Chinese restaurant at the mall. In an attempt to spark conversation, Lotte mentioned that my date was an aspiring writer. I talked about the workshops I had attended, and rather than being impressive, I think I came across as intimidating. I can never understand why people get intimidated by me, but she kind of just stayed quiet most of the night.

Then we started talking about *G.I. Joe*: the toys, the movie, and everything. Without noticing it, Bong and I had turned on the geek switch, and from there it was an easy jump to what video games we were finishing and when we should play *Guitar Hero* again. By this time, the girls had started talking about shopping, and so our double date began to drift off into two totally separate realms of conversation.

At the end of the night, Lotte and Bong dropped me off with my guitar and my comics. A couple of days later, Lotte caught me on YM and I asked how she felt about the double date. She said that she realized she hadn't brought that girl for me: she had brought the girl for herself, so that she would have someone to talk to while Bong and I geeked out.

Geeks just love me. Now I have to figure out some way to get females to love me. Or perhaps female geeks. The quest continues.



*The Kobayashi Maru of Love is a collection of essays about love, heartbreak, dating, and all the other tests that seem that they were designed to be failed by geeks. It'll be the second nonfiction book from Carl Javier. The book is still a work in progress, though the author is aiming for an early 2011 publication.*



# SHOWTIME

Amber: young, sexy and beautiful. But don't let her good looks deceive you. In fact, she hates it when people judge her based on her looks alone. "I don't like people who prejudge me. There is so much more to me than what you can see. You just need to get to know me," she promises.

In fact, at 21, Amber Dy already has a lot on her plate, since she's taking care of the family business. "It's a food venture, a fast food stall in a supermarket." The eldest of 6 siblings, her father is already showing her the ropes, teaching her everything she needs to know.

But perhaps the heavier responsibility is being a good role model for her brothers and sisters. "It's hard to be in a big family. There's a lot of pressure," Amber explains. "But it's a lot of fun, and they're very supportive." We're so happy that their support includes allowing pretty Amber to grace PLAYBOY's pages.

Fortunately for us, Amber is not all work and no play. Like any other girl her age, she likes hanging out with her friends and going to the mall, watching movies and having coffee. "I used to go out almost every night," she shares. "I really enjoy dancing. That's what I really like about going out: clubbing with my friends. But I don't drink a lot."

So she works hard, and plays hard, but what about matters of the heart? We were surprised to find (and you'll be happy to know) that she's single. But are you the guy for her? "I want someone who's understanding and supportive, who will love me for who I am. And of course he has to be responsible! I'm not actually very interested in his physical appearance. As long as I'm attracted to a guy, and I've gotten to know him better, and he has some of the characteristics I like, that's what's important."

In the meantime, Amber's got big plans. An MBA may be in the works, or even culinary school! "I'm still thinking about it," she smiles. For now, we're happy that she was able to take a break and hang out with us. "This is fun! I really like it. It's so quiet," she laughs. We're just happy that you're happy, busy Amber.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KRISTINE SOGUILON  
AND RYAN SULIT OF INDIOS BRAVOS MULTIMEDIA  
MAKE-UP BY CARMEL RIVADELO-VILLONGCO  
STYLED BY KC LEYCO  
PRODUCTION DESIGN BY CHESKA B. RAMOS













LINGERIE BY VELVET ROSE



























LAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH AMBER DY

MISS JANUARY 2010









# Playmate Data Sheet

**Name:** Amber Dy

**Date of Birth:** March 4, 1988

**Hair:** Black

**Eyes:** Brown

**Height:** 5'4"

**Weight:** 105 lbs

**Bust:** 36 **Waist:** 25 **Hips:** 36

**Turn-ons:** I like guys who are responsible and fun to be with!

**Turnoffs:** I definitely can't stand guys who are *mayabang*.

**Hobbies:** Believe it or not, I like to read, especially books about entrepreneurship! I also like meeting up with friends and going to the mall.

**Favorite Films:** *The Notebook*, *A Walk to Remember*

**Things I Do for Fun:** I'll take any excuse to take trips out of town, I love going to new places. : )













# PINBOY Party Jokes

**A** husband returned home early from work to find his wife lying naked in bed. He noticed a cigar in the ashtray on the nightstand. The husband yelled, "Where the hell did that come from?" A voice from under the bed said, "Havana."

**T**wo cows were standing next to each other in a field. One cow said, "I was artificially inseminated this morning." The other cow said, "I don't believe you." The first cow said, "It's true. No bull."

**T**asteless joke of the month: What do a plastic bag and Michael Jackson have in common? One of them is white and harmful to children, and the other is a plastic bag.

**A** man walked into a fur store with a beautiful blonde on his arm. "Show my lady your finest mink," the man said. The owner brought out a beautiful full-length mink coat. As the woman tried it on, the owner said, "That sells for \$95,000." The man said, "No problem. I'll write you a check." "Very good, sir," the owner said. "Today is Friday. You many come by on Monday to pick it up, after the check has cleared." The man wrote out the check and left with the blonde. On Monday, the man returned. The store owner was obviously upset. "How dare you show your face in here? Do you know that your check bounced because of insufficient funds?" "I know," the man said. "I just wanted to stop by and thank you for one of the best weekends of my life."

**A** doctor and his wife were having a heated argument at breakfast. As he stormed out of the house, the man angrily yelled, "You aren't that good in bed, either." By midmorning he had decided to make amends, and called home. After many rings, his wife answered, clearly out of breath. He asked, "What took you so long to answer the phone and why are you panting?" She replied, "I was in bed with the gardener, getting a second opinion."

**B**londe joke of the month: A doctor gave his blonde patient a packet of birth control pills. A week later, she returned and told him they weren't working. "What's wrong with them?" the doctor asked. She replied, "They keep falling out."

**A** lion woke up one morning feeling rowdy. He cornered a monkey and roared, "Who is mightiest of all the animals in the jungle?" The trembling monkey replied, "You are, mighty lion." Later, the lion confronted a deer and bellowed, "Who is mightiest of all the animals in the jungle?" The deer answered "You are by far the mightiest animal in the jungle."

The lion swaggered up to an elephant and roared, "Who is the mightiest of all the animals in the jungle?" Annoyed, the elephant picked up the lion with his trunk, slammed him against a tree and stomped on him. As he hobbled away, the lion said, "Man, just because you don't know the answer, you don't have to make such a big deal about it."

**W**hat do a turtle and a prostitute have in common? If they're on their backs, they're fucked.

**W**hat's the difference between oral sex and anal sex? Oral sex makes your day. Anal sex makes your hole weak.

**A** young boy walked into the kitchen and asked his mother, "Is it true that people can be taken apart like machines?" "Of course not. Where did you hear something like that?" his mother replied.

The young boy answered, "Well, the other day, Daddy was talking to someone on the phone, and he said he screwed the ass off his secretary."

**W**hy were men given larger brains than dogs? So that they wouldn't hump women's legs at cocktail parties.



*Kelly Neiman*



## The PLAYBOY Interview

# JAMES CAMERON

STEPHEN REBELLO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIZUNO

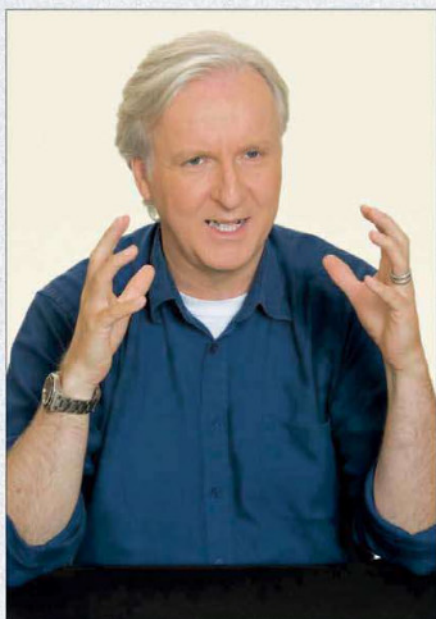
A candid conversation with the director of *Avatar* about huge blockbusters, fake sexy women, learning to be a nicer guy and reinventing the way movies are made

On August 21, film writer, producer and director James Cameron rolled the dice in a big way. The date was widely advertised, and not modestly, as *Avatar* Day, and it marked free public previews in IMAX theaters worldwide of 16 minutes of Cameron's latest movie—a \$200 million-plus science-fiction epic about a battle royal between human invaders and inhabitants of a faraway planet—rendered in what is being touted as 'cutting-edge photorealistic computer-graphics-generated 3-D' and an astonishing sense of audience immersion. The hype and curiosity surrounding *Avatar* led audiences to expect nothing less than the *Second Coming*. After all, directors Steven Spielberg and Steven Soderbergh had already raved about the excerpts in print (the latter saying it was "the craziest shit ever"), and director Jon Favreau called it "a game changer." Sony's boss claimed it would "change the way you consume entertainment." Hyperbolic fans predicted on the web that the first film in 12 years from the director of such pop culture milestones as *The Terminator*, *Aliens* and *Titanic* would "fuck our eyeballs."

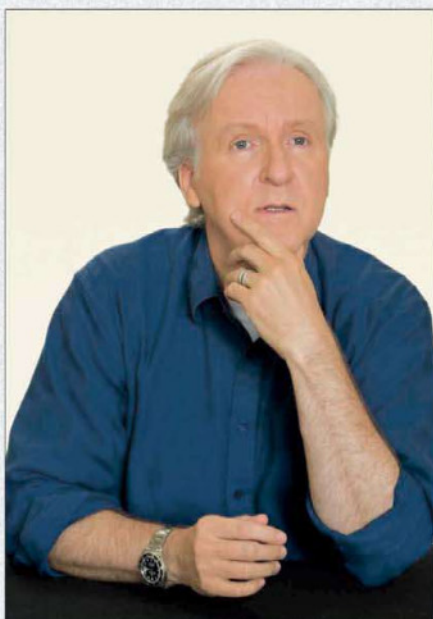
So roughly four months before *Avatar*'s December 18 opening date, audiences got a chance to see—and weigh in—for themselves. And weigh in they did, instantly spattering and pontificating on Twitter, Facebook and scores of other Internet outposts. Some mentioned half-empty theaters. Many were dazzled and left panting for more. But others, in what can best be described as a mixed response, were left with their eyeballs intact and virginal.

Cameron, fit, focused and immeasurably wealthy at the age of 55, is accustomed to being second-guessed. Few, at least in Hollywood, had expected all that much from the Canadian-born former pastry apprentice whose father was an electrical engineer and mother a nurse and artist. In 1971 the family moved to Fullerton, California, where Cameron majored in physics at nearby California State University, Fullerton. Torn between his love of films, sci-fi and science, he supported himself by working as a truck driver while making short amateur action and sci-fi movies with his friends. In 1980 he landed work in and around the thriving basement-budget-moviemaking scene presided over by Roger Corman.

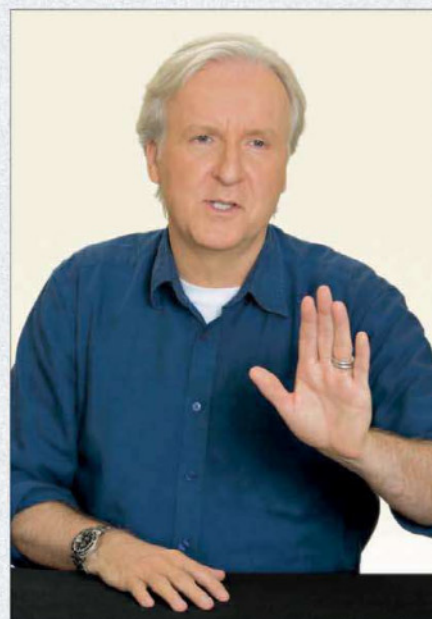
Things looked way up in 1984 when Cameron wrote and directed a futuristic action thriller for which few had great expectations—*The Terminator*. It became a huge success, made a bona fide star of the unlikely Arnold Schwarzenegger and cemented Cameron's relationship with co-writer and producer Gale Anne Hurd, Corman's former executive assistant, who in 1985 became Cameron's second wife (they divorced in 1989). From there Cameron continued to exceed expectations by directing some of the biggest and most admired financial successes of the 1980s and 1990s, including *Aliens*, *True Lies*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* and *The Abyss*. Doom was predicted in 1997 for the crushingly expensive, troubled production of *Titanic*, yet it went on to become a phenomenon, made a movie idol out of Leonardo DiCaprio and won 11 Oscars, including a best director award for Cameron. His Oscar ceremony declaration "I'm the king



"My dad treated science fiction as if it was porn. He used to throw my comics and science fiction books in the trash because he considered them mental junk. I'd go out, wipe off the coffee grounds and read them under the covers at night."



"There's a certain geek population that would much rather deal with fantasy women than real women. Let's face it: Real women are complicated. You can try your whole life and not understand them."



"If you ever go to a 25th high school reunion, make sure that you've made the world's highest-grossing movie, won 11 Academy Awards and become physically bigger than most of those guys who used to beat you up."



of the world!" raised eyebrows, but that's the kind of thing you can get away with when you've created Hollywood's all-time biggest moneymaker.

Cameron earned a reputation for being a taskmaster, tough on his crews and actors, manic in his attention to detail and quest for perfection. Wild and woolly stories emerged from his sets of mutinous crews and actors vowing never to work with him again. But he seemed untouchable and unstoppable, co-founding a special-effects company, Digital Domain, and avoiding the ready-made projects Hollywood offered him. Instead, in 2002 Cameron, an avid diver, launched into a series of undersea documentaries such as *Expedition Bismarck* and *Ghosts of the Abyss* that explore legendary sunken ruins. Some

speculated *Titanic's* freak success had given him a permanent case of director's block.

Now the five-time-married Cameron is about to resurface. PLAYBOY sent Contributing Editor Stephen Rebello to Cameron's Malibu mansion to investigate where the director has been and where he's headed. Says Rebello, who last interviewed Benicio Del Toro, "This was the kind of interview that at first I thought the intense Cameron may bolt up and expect me to go deep-sea diving, arm wrestle or book passage on an interplanetary flight. But he relaxed and was gentlemanly, and although he's known for playing it close to the vest, he loosened up and showed himself to be funnier, hipper and even smarter than you may imagine."

**PLAYBOY:** Your new movie *Avatar's* stereoscopic 3-D and CGI have people in the film industry and the media comparing its technological breakthrough to the birth of sound and color film. They've also predicted the movie could become a cultural phenomenon. Are you worried about Internet fans who have posted snarky comments about the preview footage shown in theaters in August?

**CAMERON:** The ones who were the most vocally negative will be there opening night, I promise you. The ones I worry about are those who haven't heard of the movie. We know from the exit polling that the response was 95 percent ecstatic. Most of the five percent negative response is from the fanatic fans who imagined the movie in their minds but now have to deal with my movie.

**PLAYBOY:** Does this prejudgment remind you of 1997, when people predicted big failure for *Titanic* because it took so long to make, busted its budget and had no big stars?

**CAMERON:** They know *Avatar* is expensive, but that story hasn't gathered any traction because—what the fuck?—I always make expensive movies, people always like them, and people always want me to do it again.

**PLAYBOY:** How will you react if critics come gunning for you?

**CAMERON:** *Avatar* is made very consciously for movie fans. If critics like it, fine. I can't say I won't read the reviews, because I may not be able to resist. I spent a couple of decades in the capricious world of being judged by those not knowledgeable about the depth and history of film and with whom I would not want to have a conversation—with a few notable exceptions. Why would I want to be judged by them? For me, this past decade has been about retreating to the great fundamentals, things that aren't passing fads or subject to the whims of some idiot critic. You can't write a review of the laws of thermodynamics.

**PLAYBOY:** Moviegoers have already been wowed by lifelike CG and motion-capture characters such as Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings*. Will your blue-skinned aliens and gigantic monsters satisfy jaded audiences?

**CAMERON:** Ultimately audiences don't give a rat's ass how a movie is made. When people see the movie, the story will be about the world of the planet Pandora, the creatures on it, the characters—such as the former Marine and amputee played by

Sam Worthington—and the huge conflict between the humans and the inhabitants of Pandora. How does it move you? How emotional is it? It's pretty damn emotional and dramatic. That said, I think we certainly exceeded our expectations in making these characters feel real.

**PLAYBOY:** Audiences may not give a rat's ass about how a movie is made, but didn't you have to wait a decade before special effects technology could accommodate what you had in mind?

**CAMERON:** Here I was the CEO of a major digital effects company, Lightstorm, which was designed to create fantasy CG characters and was not doing that, so I said, "I'll write a script that is beyond state of the art, we'll make it, and it will force us to become a world leader in effects." Everybody looked at what I had in mind and said I was crazy. In the wake of *Titanic* I saw how much a project can go off the rails, and I got a little more conservative about taking risks. So I put *Avatar* away because no one had yet accomplished the photo reality and human emotional expression we needed until Peter Jackson cracked the code with Gollum and *King Kong*. And Industrial Light & Magic was doing it in a completely different way in *Pirates of the Caribbean*. With *Avatar* it's okay if the characters aren't perfect. Who knows what aliens are supposed to look like?

**PLAYBOY:** How is film technology influencing how we process reality?

**CAMERON:** Human society and human consciousness are evolving before our eyes in an unprecedented, historic way as we adapt and integrate with our machines. Typically people don't know when they're making history, but we are definitely making history right now, for better or worse.

**PLAYBOY:** You're a major techie, but does any current tech toy elude you?

**CAMERON:** On Twitter, a tweet has to be less than, what, 25 words? [Editor's note: It's 140 characters maximum.] There isn't one concept I would be interested in discussing with anyone that could be summed up in 25 words or fewer. I'm totally not into Facebook or Twitter, so that makes me a dinosaur right there.

**PLAYBOY:** Sigourney Weaver's character Ellen Ripley in your film *Aliens* is a powerful sex icon, and you may have created another in *Avatar* with a barely dressed, blue-skinned, 10-foot-tall warrior who fiercely defends herself and the creatures of her planet. Even without state-of-the-art special

effects, Zoe Saldana—who voices and models the character for CG morphing—is hot.

**CAMERON:** Let's be clear. There is a classification above hot, which is "smoking hot." She is smoking hot.

**PLAYBOY:** Did any of your teenage erotic icons inspire the character Saldana plays?

**CAMERON:** As a young kid, when I saw Raquel Welch in that skintight white latex suit in *Fantastic Voyage*—that's all she wrote. Also, *Vampirella* was so hot I used to buy every comic I could get my hands on. The fact she didn't exist didn't bother me because we have these quintessential female images in our mind, and in the case of the male mind, they're grossly distorted. When you see something that reflects your id, it works for you.

**PLAYBOY:** So Saldana's character was specifically designed to appeal to guys' ids?

**CAMERON:** And they won't be able to control themselves. They will have actual lust for a character that consists of pixels of ones and zeros. You're never going to meet her, and if you did, she's 10 feet tall and would snap your spine. The point is, 99.9 percent of people aren't going to meet any of the movie actresses they fall in love with, so it doesn't matter if it's Neytiri or Michelle Pfeiffer.

**PLAYBOY:** We seem to need fantasy icons like Lara Croft and Wonder Woman, despite knowing they mess with our heads.

**CAMERON:** Most of men's problems with women probably have to do with realizing women are real and most of them don't look or act like Vampirella. A big recalibration happens when we're forced to deal with real women, and there's a certain geek population that would much rather deal with fantasy women than real women. Let's face it: Real women are complicated. You can try your whole life and not understand them.

**PLAYBOY:** How much did you get into calibrating your movie heroine's hotness?

**CAMERON:** Right from the beginning I said, "She's got to have tits," even though that makes no sense because her race, the Na'vi, aren't placental mammals. I designed her costumes based on a taparrabo, a loincloth thing worn by Mayan Indians. We go to another planet in this movie, so it would be stupid if she ran around in a Brazilian thong or a fur bikini like Raquel Welch in *One Million Years B.C.*

**PLAYBOY:** Are her breasts on view?

**CAMERON:** I came up with this free-floating, lion's-man-like array of feathers, and we



strategically lit and angled shots to not draw attention to her breasts, but they're right there. The animation uses a physics-based sim that takes into consideration gravity, air movement and the momentum of her hair, her top. We had a shot in which Neytiri falls into a specific position, and because she is lit by orange firelight, it lights up the nipples. That was good, except we're going for a PG-13 rating, so we wound up having to fix it. We'll have to put it on the special edition DVD; it will be a collector's item. A Neytiri PLAYBOY Centerfold would have been a good idea.

**PLAYBOY:** So you're okay with arousing PG-13 chubbies?

**CAMERON:** If such a thing should happen—and I'm not saying it will—that would be fine.

**PLAYBOY:** You reunited with Sigourney Weaver for the first time since *Aliens*, over 20 years ago. What took you so long?

**CAMERON:** She was my safest casting choice to play the botanist, which is why I didn't want to cast her. I woke up one day and said, Don't be a dumb shit; she'll be perfect. Sig is worthy of awe, but she's also goofy, funny, deeply committed to acting, wicked smart and really sweet. There's no gun porn around her character in this film like there was for Ripley in *Aliens*, and she doesn't have big clanging brass balls. Instead, she has a scholarly hippie dowdiness that makes her look as though she no longer fits civilization—a little like Dian Fossey, which is interesting because I had originally gotten Sig into the Fossey movie *Gorillas in the Mist*; I bailed, but she stuck with the project. I'm really happy with the cast. We went way out on a limb casting Sam Worthington, but he came through for us. So did Zoe. As for Sigourney, we get along great because I don't have to be demanding with her; she is highly demanding of herself and me.

**PLAYBOY:** You have a rep for being demanding of everyone you work with. Ed Harris is rumored to have punched you on *The Abyss* set and was quoted as saying the strain of making that 1989 movie had actors hurling couches out windows and smashing walls. Kate Winslet said making *Titanic* had her thinking, Please, God, let me die—and she nearly drowned.

**CAMERON:** I'll cop to my faults, but I'll also defend the situation in a rational way, and it goes like this: Isn't the purpose of being attracted to something intense and challenging—such as, say, white-water rafting—to come out the other side and tell everybody how you almost died? It doesn't mean you almost died. We simply let Kate think she was nearly drowning. A little sputtering and coughing does not count in my book, because I have almost drowned several times and know what it feels like. Asking God to please let you die? I was thinking the same thing at about the same point. *Titanic* was a catastrophic production financially and getting worse every day. Kate probably got some unnecessary stress from me, but I would say 99 percent of her stress was internally induced as part of her acting process.

**PLAYBOY:** You're saying she was telling the press post-white-water-rafting stories?

**CAMERON:** The real question is "Would she work with me again?" I'm sure it would have to be the right material and all those things, but my guess is, absolutely. I'd certainly work with her again; she's very talented. Whereas Leo DiCaprio switches his acting on and off like a faucet, Kate's acting process is to internalize all this stuff and use it. She was carrying the whole burden of this enormous production on her back. I probably didn't do enough to wrap the actors in cotton wool. The part of directing I wasn't good at—and probably still am not the best at, although I'm better now—is the personal touch: letting people know you appreciate what they're doing. Personally, I could not have operated under my direction back then; my pride wouldn't have allowed it.

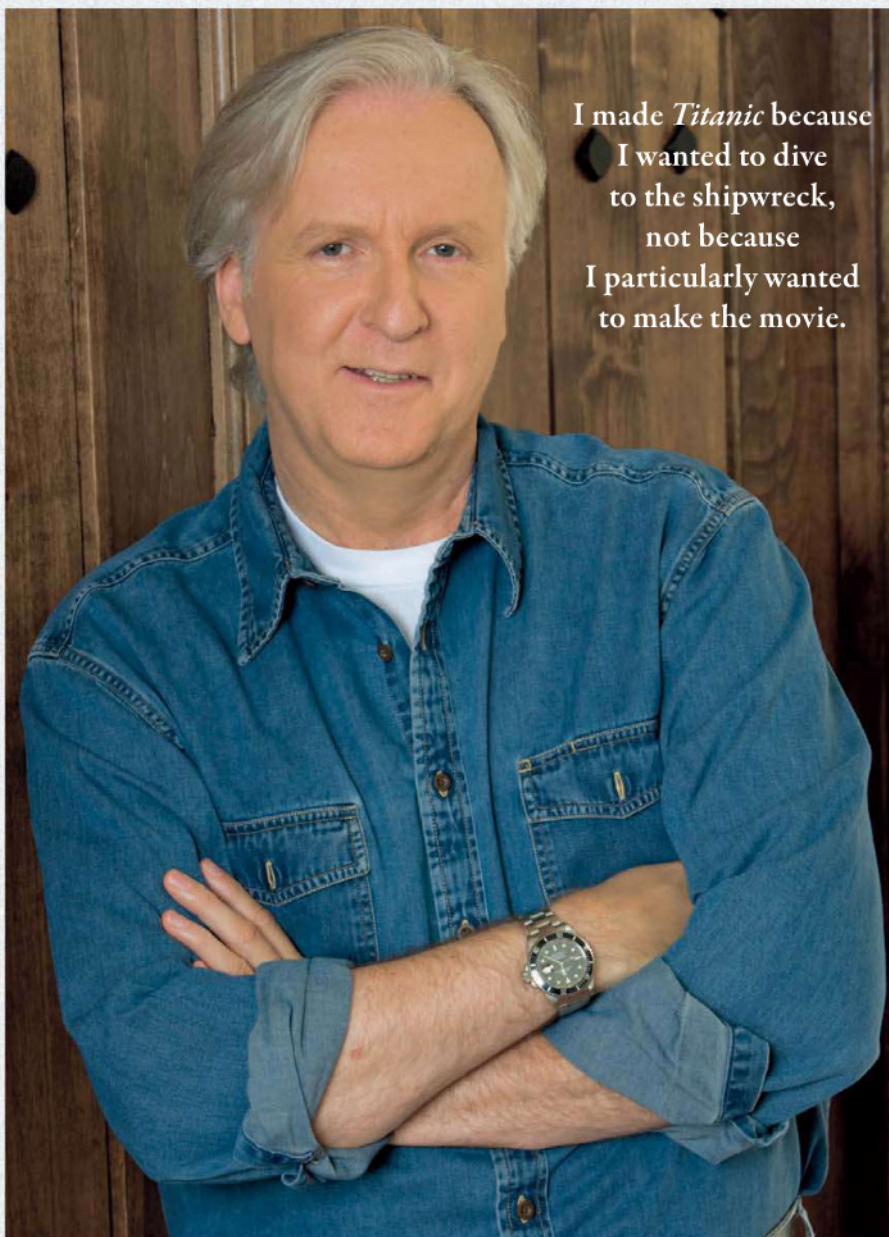
**PLAYBOY:** Have you ever thrown or taken a punch on a movie set?

**CAMERON:** Absolutely not. It would be an alien concept for me. But I won't make a movie if I think

I won't be tested and it won't be grueling for me, the crew, the actors. Anybody who signs on is going to be tested. So there are challenges, but it gets misconstrued that there was gross irresponsibility on the part of the production to put people into that situation, when in fact they wanted to be right there.

**PLAYBOY:** Some heard your "I'm king of the world" speech after winning the best director Oscar as a sure sign of a highly developed ego.

**CAMERON:** *Titanic* was wildly celebrated on every possible level, so sure, I knew how good that felt. It was almost like back in the 1980s when I got a taste of coke. That door opened a crack, and I saw a glimpse of what it was like to have something more powerful than you that you have to answer to. I put it down in, like, a week when most people—everybody around me—didn't. Getting a glimpse through that door and seeing that accolades can be so capriciously withdrawn made me know I didn't want to base my self-value on that.





**PLAYBOY:** How has working with underwater exploration crews instead of film crews in the past decade changed you?

**CAMERON:** People who have worked with me before think I'm just as crazy, but I think I've come back to moviemaking with a different perspective. On all my films prior to *Avatar*, the film was the one god you had to serve. Getting involved with NASA and various space projects and doing underwater exploration, I got to meet not only a diversity of people but also a diversity of cultures of thought. It was sobering and necessary to see that what we do in Hollywood means almost nothing to them. I look around the Hollywood landscape and see people who can't or don't want to exist outside that bubble. I don't want to be one of them. Now I see moviemaking as officially a job.

**PLAYBOY:** What aspects of Hollywood megasuccess made you want to climb into submersibles and film documentaries starring sunken ships, instead of movies starring Leonardo DiCaprio?

**CAMERON:** I made *Titanic* because I wanted to dive to the shipwreck, not because I particularly wanted to make the movie. The *Titanic* was the Mount Everest of shipwrecks, and as a diver I wanted to do it right. When I learned some other guys had dived to the *Titanic* to make an IMAX movie, I said, "I'll make a Hollywood movie to pay for an expedition and do the same thing." I loved that first taste, and I wanted more.

**PLAYBOY:** So *Titanic* was a means to an end.

**CAMERON:** *Titanic* was about "fuck you" money. It came along at a point in my life when I said, "I can make movies until I'm 80, but I can't do expedition stuff when I'm 80." My father was an engineer. I had studied to be an engineer and had a mental restlessness to live the life I had turned my back on when I switched from the sciences to the arts in college.

**PLAYBOY:** You've been a diver for years. When you make so many potentially dangerous exploration dives, how much are your wife and kids on your mind?

**CAMERON:** Whenever we tout one of our documentary films we sort of emphasize the risk or that we're going into unexplored territory, doing things few have done. The reality is it's pretty darn safe. Having said that, it can be quite white-knuckle when something unexpected happens. I've spoken at NASA seminars and symposia about the nature of risk because I make action movies and have managed to lead seven deep-ocean expeditions with no fatalities or significant injuries. And my films have been relatively injury-free—well below the industry average—because we have a pretty rigorous approach to safety.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you observe any rituals when you're about to climb into a submersible?

**CAMERON:** You don't want to put a big emphasis on it because you're there to do a job and stay focused. But every time I close the hatch of a submersible I say to whoever is gathered to see us off, "I'll see you in the sunshine." Of course there's

no sunshine down there, so to say that means you're coming back to the surface. On most of our dives we come back at night because we stay way too long, and the only people waiting are a couple of bored deckhands. By that time the people who were waving and wishing you luck 16 hours earlier are asleep somewhere or drunk in their cabin.

**PLAYBOY:** As you mentioned, your father was an electrical engineer. Your mother was an artist and nurse. How are you most like and most unlike them?

**CAMERON:** I'm a pretty representative fusion of their DNA, a Mendelian genetics experiment gone well. That created a lot of tension, though, because my father was very authoritarian and pragmatic, but my mom had a romantic sense of wanting to head for the hills, to explore. My mom used to nurture what I was about by taking me to the Royal Ontario Museum to draw. My idea of a great weekend was to spend it drawing, going hiking or building something, like a medieval siege engine.

**PLAYBOY:** You came of age in the late 1960s and early 1970s. How did your parents view the sexual revolution, drugs and the antiwar movement?

**CAMERON:** They were pretty much against everything. I can't think of anything my dad was for except hockey. He used to throw my comics and science-fiction books in the trash because he considered them mental junk. I'd go out, wipe off the coffee grounds and spaghetti and read them under the covers at night. He treated science fiction as if it was porn. I actually don't think I had any porn, but I had the occasional **PLAYBOY** I kept well hidden.

**PLAYBOY:** You spent your first 17 years in Canada. Do you ever feel Canadian?

**CAMERON:** I went back to get an honorary degree at a Canadian university. When everybody stood and sang the national anthem, I stood onstage in front of a thousand Canadians just moving my lips because I had forgotten the words. I was never into the national anthem and never even went to a football game in high school, so I never had occasion to sing it.

**PLAYBOY:** You weren't a high school jock?

**CAMERON:** In a small, very jocky school I was president of the science club, which consisted of me, some other lab rats and a Czechoslovakian girl who could barely speak English. I had been accelerated twice in elementary school, so I was two years younger than everybody and small. I hung out with the smart, wide-bell-bottomed, paisley-shirt, hair-down-the-middle-of-your-back counterculture rejects. I didn't do drugs and looked like an accountant. Jocks would come up to me in the hall and punch me for no reason.

**PLAYBOY:** Have you since run into any of those guys?

**CAMERON:** Yes, and if you ever go to a 25th high school reunion, make sure that in the previous two months you've made the world's highest-grossing movie, won 11 Academy Awards and become physically bigger than most of those guys who used to beat you up. I walked up to

them one by one and said, "You know, I could take your ass right now, and I'm tempted, but I won't." Actually, they were all nice guys except for one who was still big and mean. I left him alone.

**PLAYBOY:** Did anything in your childhood predict you'd gravitate to the career you're in today?

**CAMERON:** I could always get kids on my block to rally around some harebrained idea, such as, "Hey, let's build an airplane." It doesn't occur to kids that you don't build planes, but we built one that flew briefly until the ropes broke. A high school biology teacher encouraged us to do something interesting, so we started a theater arts program with a small group of kids craving something besides the football or basketball game. I did production design, lights and scenery and wrote and directed a little. Funny, but I didn't immediately relate it to some kind of career path.

**PLAYBOY:** How did your life change when your father's job relocated the Cameron family to Fullerton, California when you were 17?

**CAMERON:** In Canada there was a general resentment against America. We lived in a border town, and America was this huge culture generator that constantly bathed us in its radiation. To move to Los Angeles was to go into the belly of the beast. At first I thought the culture was all about cars. The kids seemed so shallow. I wanted to shake them and say, "Can't you see how you're destroying the earth with your materialistic values?" I started college six months after we moved, and of course I learned to drive. In the U.S., if you don't have a car, or at least a license and your dad's car, you're not getting laid.

**PLAYBOY:** That's pretty much in the fine print on most driver's licenses. So you got laid?

**CAMERON:** Yeah, and I wound up marrying that girl seven years later. She was my girlfriend in college, on and off. We had a lot of fun. She was a waitress at Bob's Big Boy, and I worked at a machine shop. We were just two blue-collar kids who'd go out to the desert and have a large time, drive cars fast and be hellions. I was shaking off all my practical conservatism—before that I hadn't smoked dope, hadn't driven fast. It's a good thing I survived, is all I can say. And here I was living in the street-racing capital of southern California.

**PLAYBOY:** Did you do any street racing?

**CAMERON:** Hell yeah! All my new friends had hot rods and almost killed me a bunch of times on rides—accidentally spinning out or sliding backward down a freeway off-ramp because they thought they were such good drivers. After enduring these white-knuckle terror rides for about a year, I got a 1969 Mach 1 Mustang and made it really fast by tearing apart the engine, lowering it, putting in Coney shocks, putting the battery in the back to transfer the weight. I stripped everything off it and made my own kind of fiberglass hood and spoiler—all the stuff you now just buy aftermarket.

**PLAYBOY:** Were you good at street racing?

**CAMERON:** I got good by systematically taking my friends—the ones who white-knuckled me—for



their karmic rides. After that they never rode with me again. I'd go out on my own at three or four A.M. and teach myself to drive really fast, then go out on wet nights and drive sideways for hours, putting myself into a drift to learn how to get out of it. There was no name for that then, but now we call it drifting.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you ever let loose behind the wheel now?

**CAMERON:** As a family man and father of five, especially two teenagers, I have to lead by example. For me to get in a dumb wreck racing would send the wrong signal. What's also taken the fun out of it is that there's no place you can drive fast anymore.

**PLAYBOY:** What were your earliest jobs?

**CAMERON:** My first job was at 15, working as an assistant to a crazy Viennese pastry chef in a giant restaurant that served 1,500 dinners a night in Niagara Falls, near where I grew up. A certain kind of showmanship gets in your blood when you grow up in a tourist town. In college in California I worked as a machinist, a bus mechanic, a precision tool and die maker, a high school janitor, whatever I could find. I'm pretty blue collar. I swear like a blue-collar guy when I'm on the set.

**PLAYBOY:** How did you make the transition to moviemaking?

**CAMERON:** I loved to write, draw and paint, but I also loved physics and astronomy. No career path seemed to reconcile those two directions except science fiction. Two of my closest friends in Fullerton were interested in filmmaking, but there was no film program. We formed a dumb-ass group of eventually four people, and every week one of us made his own little movie in which the other three would have to act, do stunts, set themselves on fire—whatever was necessary. Later we wrote a script and got it to a tax-sheltered group made up mostly of dentists and an investment guy who had dreams of doing *Star Wars*. We got \$20,000 from them, rented a \$200,000 camera that we completely disassembled because we had no idea how to operate it, and we made a movie even though we were monkeys and had no idea what we were doing.

**PLAYBOY:** What impact did *Star Wars* and George Lucas have on you?

**CAMERON:** My entrée into Hollywood came as a direct result of *Star Wars* because George Lucas suddenly made science fiction gold instead of a ghettoized B-movie genre. When most people saw *Star Wars* there was the shock of the new. For me there was the shock of recognition, as if somebody had taken my private dream and put it up on the screen. I had gone through the same evolution George had: writing, drawing and envisioning these hyperkinetic World War II dogfights in outer space. Good thing I'm not paranoid, the kind of schizo who thinks the CIA is spying on his thoughts and then has to wear tinfoil on his head. I took *Star Wars* as a sign that what I had to offer was something people wanted.

**PLAYBOY:** Your experience with amateur films helped you get a foot in the door of low-budget filmmaking with Roger Corman's company, where

you made miniature models and designed sets for *Rock 'n' Roll High School* and *Battle Beyond the Stars*.

**CAMERON:** On a Corman film everybody just rose to his or her own level—the opposite of the Peter Principle, in a way. You didn't think of a career; you thought, What's my next opportunity? If you got an opportunity to direct, you didn't question it. Ron Howard didn't question it when he got *Grand Theft Auto*; Francis Ford Coppola didn't question it when he got to do *Dementia 13*. These are kind of junk movies, but we were interested in the process, in learning. That's where I met writer-producer Gale Hurd, and the recognition that we would make a great team was pretty instantaneous. It took only a year or two for us to make a movie together.

**PLAYBOY:** The movie you made together in 1984, *The Terminator*, got you your first big directing job and made a star of Arnold Schwarzenegger. Did Schwarzenegger's ascendancy in Hollywood and politics surprise you?

**CAMERON:** If you've known him for even a short time, you're not surprised by anything he accomplishes. He used to say, "You don't program yourself for failure; you program yourself for success." At first I thought it was just macho bullshit. But I've subsequently made many decisions using that principle, especially in recent years. The decision to show 16 minutes of *Avatar* to the public during a special *Avatar* Day was based on the principle of programming myself for success.

**PLAYBOY:** Niagara Falls, near where you spent your childhood, is a favorite wedding spot. Did growing up there make you hyperaware of marriage?

**CAMERON:** I don't know, but I have been married five times. I'm a perfectionist, so I kept trying until I got it right, which I have, I'm happy to report. Suzy Amis is a keeper. They were all great women, but there are people you can love and later not like, or it can be your rhythms and energies are too disparate to function together as partners. I found—and this was the big one—you have to work at it. Before that I had this attitude, Well, I'll do this until it doesn't work, and then I'll bail. You'll never stay married if you have that attitude.

**PLAYBOY:** What caused the attitude shift?

**CAMERON:** It was something a therapist said. I don't believe in shrinks, and they're not part of my life, but in this particular case I had agreed to go because it might help, and he gave me something that has stuck with me as a philosophy. He said, "You don't do this for her; you do this for you, so things make sense to you." You get into a relationship and make certain promises, and you have to live by a code, a set of values, for your own reasons, not to please the other person. Your word is your bond. It doesn't matter what kind of money is involved or how the situation subsequently changes. You have to be smart enough to go into a situation knowing the dangers, and you have to live by the agreements you make going in.

**PLAYBOY:** Three of your four ex-wives—Gale Hurd, Linda Hamilton and Kathryn Bigelow—are prominent in the movie business. If director Bigelow asked for your opinion of her film *The Hurt Locker*, could you be honest without the discussion reopening old wounds?

**CAMERON:** Kathryn and I are still close, and we'd work together on a film tomorrow. The key is to be honest but diplomatic, constructive, not destructive. She was interested in my input on *The Hurt Locker*, and I basically said, "You did a great job, and I wouldn't change a frame," and it was true in that case. She has seen *Avatar* at different stages and given good input. Her current partner, Mark Boal, who wrote *The Hurt Locker*, gave me notes as well. It's very collegial. I don't have a lot of those relationships, but I value the ones I do have.

**PLAYBOY:** When director McG's *Terminator Salvation* was up against Michael Bay's *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* at the box office last summer, McG said, "Michael Bay has a big cock, but I'd like to believe mine is bigger. If he's up for it, we can reveal ourselves on the Spartacus steps at Universal and put the question to rest." As co-writer and director of two *Terminator* movies, would you have been willing to drop trou with them to settle the matter?

**CAMERON:** No, I prefer we keep work and play separate. Being a good director probably doesn't have a whole lot to do with the size of one's penis, big toe, thumb size or anything else. That's about the dumbest fucking thing you could ever say. I'm surprised he didn't call me out.

**PLAYBOY:** As someone who has been accused of going off on the set, what do you make of those leaked tapes of Christian Bale berating a crew member on *Terminator Salvation*?

**CAMERON:** The *Avatar* crew all thought that was a hoot, and for the next few days we were all quoting what I thought was an inspired rant. The joke is I'm a tyrannical guy, but I said, "Man, I have to take my hat off to this guy. I could not pull a rant like that if I had to." I mean, I can get on a roll but not like that. I just had to bow down.

**PLAYBOY:** How old do you consider yourself to be emotionally?

**CAMERON:** Probably 14, and I'm happy about that. In some ways I'm even younger than that because I never want to lose the intellectual curiosity—of always wanting to know how stuff works and wanting to put things together with my hands. I can relate very well to my six-year-old, who's always building something. If I let him go he'd just take off into the woods and not come back until the end of the day, just like I used to do as a kid.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you already plotting how you might top *Avatar*?

**CAMERON:** I haven't decided. I always say that when a woman is in the midst of childbirth, don't ask her if she wants another child. I'm crowning right now.





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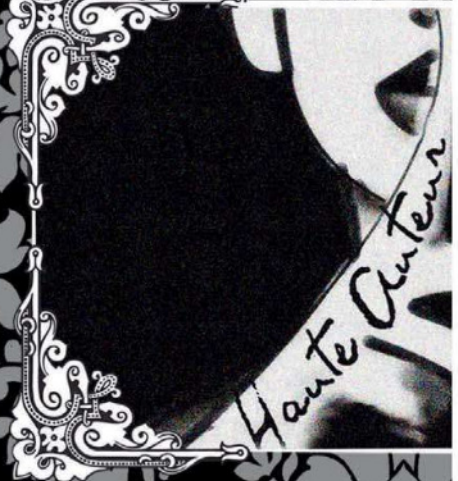
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# Calling the Shots


Cinema has always been a collaborative effort. It is a shared venture, from the humblest of single-camera, self-written projects to the grandest of international endeavors employing thousands of actors and crew. At the forefront of these ventures are the visionaries who believe in their craft and the messages they convey. Through them, we are enriched and enlivened.

PLAYBOY would like to introduce you to some of the best filmmakers the Philippine film industry has to offer.

BY MIKHAIL LECAROS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSER DUMBRIQUE AND KRISTINE SOGUILON  
PRODUCTION DESIGN BY CHESKA B. RAMOS







## Ricky Lee

Seen here cheerfully confronting a whimsical version of writer's block, writer extraordinaire Ricky Lee took a little bit of convincing to join our pictorial: "I don't normally pose for pictorials. I wouldn't know what to do!" laughed the famed scribe when first approached by PLAYBOY. A little bit of arm-twisting later, the *Himala* writer was in our studio, complete with his own wardrobe. The diehard Noranian told us with a laugh, "It's the perfect excuse to wear this shirt, since *hindi ko talaga 'to sinusuwat, masyadong self-serving, parang nagyayabang ako!*"

With a career spanning over twenty years in film, theater, fiction, journalism and the academe, Lee is still amazed by the fame (and fans) he's achieved. "It's weird! The idea that a writer... *hindi naman kami artista na naghahanap ng fame*, so *yung idea na nilalapitan ako ng mga taong hindi ko kilala...* I was shy! For a while, *nagtatago talaga ako!* But later on, I realized *natutuwa talaga sila sa mga nagawa ko*, so now I'm OK with it. *Natanggap ko na.* I'm happy to let the directors and actors have the spotlight, but what I have is very gratifying. It's funny that they (the fans) sometimes call me '*direk.*' Well... half the time, they call me '*direk.*' The other half, they call me Ricky Lo!"

"Well... half the time, they call me '*direk.*' The other half, they call me Ricky Lo!"



## Jim Libiran

"I learned to appreciate films when I was studying," says Jim Libiran. "As a member of the UP Cineastes' Studio, I developed a love of film in a way that I may not have gotten from a professor. It's one thing to sit through five films in a day for a class, but it's something entirely different when you're doing that same thing with your orgmates, friends, or even your crush while eating Chippy and popcorn! What I got from the Cineastes, I now share with everyone who works with me - we have 'film orgies' because I want them to know that our work is about the practice of loving film and caring for it with enthusiasm, no matter what we're doing."

Jim's love and appreciation of film would pay off in 2007, when his directorial debut, *Tribu*, took top honors at the Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival, receiving critical acclaim both here and abroad. An unflinching look at life in Tondo and based on an original screenplay Jim conceptualized, *Tribu* took inspiration from several incidents in his own life. Jim says the finished film is "like my diary, based on things I myself experienced; an homage to my youth and my hometown as well as being an assertion of myself. Like they say, your first project should be very familiar; *wag ka aalis sa milieu mo*."

Travelling the world to promote his film, Jim became accustomed to meeting new people, but one of the most memorable was with someone already familiar to him. "The best experience I had was when Mother Lily watched *Tribu* in Paris, and she told me, 'Hoy, Mr. Krung-krung—that's what she calls me—*ang bigat sa dibdib!*' Ironically, we became close because of that. We talked about movies, and she was telling me about how she started, and I told her about my experiences, and we bonded over that. I told her: now that I'm producing my own films, *nakikita ko na kung gaano kahirap talaga gumawa ng pelikula*."

"Back in the day, it was enough to have a blockbuster in the Philippines, but now, with indie films, we have an opportunity to have a dialogue with the world and show them what we're about. At a screening in Greece, a festival programmer came up to me and said: 'You know, we used to have a Filipina nanny, and now, because of your film, I understand her better.' In a lot of countries, 'Filipina' used to be a term for 'yaya,' but now, because of the new films that are coming out, people are seeing that there's more to us and our culture. Festival-goers all over the world aren't there because *may kinatay sa pelikula ni Dante Mendoza* or because gangsters are killing each other in my movie. They're there for the humanity, and it touches them. As filmmakers, we have to be conscious of what we put on the screen, because it shows who we are as a people."





"We have 'film orgies' because I want them to know that our work is about the practice of loving film and caring for it with enthusiasm, no matter what we're doing."



From left to right, the cast and crew of *Tribu*: O.G. Snitch, Omicron (standing), O.G. Sacred (all members of Sigaw Ng Tundo); Producer Mitchell Moreno, Director Jim Libiran (special appearance by Jim's Persian, Smoke, short for "Smokin' Pussy")




## Raymond Red

One would imagine that becoming the first Filipino to take home the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or (for 2000's *Anino*) would entitle one to just sit around and wait for offers to come in, but for director Raymond Red, this was not the case. "Strangely, it was the opposite; I struggled to find funding for the projects I wanted to do, as very few people wanted to make the kinds or types of films I was interested in doing."

Refusing to be shoehorned into the mold of an 'indie' filmmaker, Raymond describes what he does as 'alternative cinema.' "It's funny, you know," he adds. "I feel really old now, because people call me an indie pioneer, but I wasn't the first. Even National Artist Lamberto Avellana could be considered an independent filmmaker! My inspiration was Kidlat Tahimik, who was doing indie work in the 70's, when they didn't even have a term for what he was doing! Back then, they called it 'experimental,' 'underground' or 'avant-garde.'"

He goes on to say: "The biggest problem with alternative cinema these days is that there a lot of good films out there, but with so many being produced, it's hard to sort them out. Today, with technology, anyone can pick up a camera and say they're a filmmaker, but of course, this is something that started with my generation in the 80's. We started making films on the Super 8 format, taking advantage of an accessible medium that let us make the films we wanted."

Currently making the international festival rounds is Raymond's latest work, *Himpapawid*, about an airline hijacking gone wrong. Despite it being his first film since *Anino*, Raymond is content to have taken his time. "I make personal films, with a lot of my personal convictions, where the primary goal isn't really to earn money, but to put out a story that comes across with a real message."



"It's funny, you know. I feel really old now, because people call me an indie pioneer."



"*Lahat tayo, we can all be directors, but you need to experience things para ikaw talaga ang nagdidirect. You need to have experiences.*"



## Bb. Joyce Bernal

The director of such hits as *Don't Give Up on Us* and *For the First Time*, as well as 2009's blockbuster comedy *Kimmy Dora*, Bb. Joyce Bernal makes no bones about her contributions to the local film industry. "I'm not an artist, and I don't think that way. But, of course, this is the film industry—art films, mainstream, indie—*magkakaiba lang kami ng ginagawa*, but still, we're serving under one industry. Even though I came from UP, mainstream *talaga yung* thinking ko. I'm a fan of Nora Aunor, Sharon Cuneta, *kaya masaya* when I started working with them. *Ka-wavelength ko sila, at yung ginagawa ko hindi nalalayo sa karanasan ko!* [laughs]"

"I'd like to try other things. The concepts I have in mind are kind of bold; I want to do a pink film *na medyo* bold or something *na medyo may pagka-grit*. It's also been my dream to do a documentary about voters. And I think it would be fun *din* to see some of today's wholesome actors and actresses in a film *kung saan may tapang ang* dialogue; it's an idea I've had since 2002. Even horror, *pwede kong subukan; pag dumating, dumating, maiba lang*. In fact, when I do a love story or a romantic comedy these days, when I accept the assignment, *hindi na pwede kagaya nang dati, medyo dapat edad ko na*. I can't make high school movies anymore, *medyo malayo na sa experience ko!* [laughs]"

"*Lahat tayo, we can all be directors, but you need to experience things para ikaw talaga ang nagdidirect. You need to have experiences na pwede mo ilagay sa* character *at sa eksena nila. Kung wala ka talagang* experiences, that's where research comes in! Now, *okay lang yung* research, *dadagdagan niya ang kaalaman mo*, but personal experience will give your scenes life and truth that the audience can relate to. Otherwise, it's not real, and *wala lang*, you're just shooting a scene."



## BRILLANTE MENDOZA

"I just want to be truthful in all my films, and sex is a part of that. Sex is sex. My parents aren't very liberated when it comes to that kind of thing, but I suppose I've always thought that sex shouldn't be a big deal. It does frustrate me, but many people forget that the sex isn't really what the films are about as a whole. *Nakaka-frustrate*, but it's the system, really; we have to change the whole mindset of the Filipino population, and you can't do that overnight.

"Audiences now are more educated and aware, although it doesn't end there. When you're aware of something, you have to learn to appreciate and understand it. It makes me happy that now we have more and more media practitioners who are really pushing and understanding who we are and what we are doing; it's one way of showing, telling and letting the people know *na kakaibang klaseng art form itong ginagawa namin*, and that we should have support from all of you guys, because at some point, we can't do it alone. Without the support and encouragement of the community, *lalong nakakabigat*, but then again, *ito ang gusto ko*, this is what I like doing."

### ISABEL LOPEZ

Isabel Lopez's career has seen a revival of sorts, having received good reviews for her portrayal of *Kinatay's* title role, but that's not to say she hasn't been keeping busy: she recently produced an advocacy film with an anti-drug message, *Tulak*, and is currently poised to run for Councilor for the 4th District of Quezon City. On *Kinatay*, the actress shares: "When [Brillante] offered it to me, I said, 'Are you sure you want me? There are so many young stars who can do that, younger, with sexy bodies, why me?' He said it wasn't an issue. He wanted someone who'd been through a lot in life, someone with experiences.

"I'm really, really happy with the film now, but I turned it down initially because I knew it would be emotionally, psychologically demanding, and there was a lot of preparation I needed to do for the role.

"I accepted in the end because Brillante actually texted me the next day to say that he'd talked to two other actresses for the part but that he only saw me, he *already* saw me, in the role. Now how could I turn that down?"

### MERCEDES CABRAL

Brillante Mendoza is notorious for not giving his actors complete scripts, with the intention that the characters remain focused on their individual scenes. This unconventional approach is something that his performers have found challenging, yet rewarding. One such performer is our cover girl from December 2008, Mercedes Cabral. "I first saw *Kinatay* in Cannes, and *dun ko lang nalaman yung buong kwento!* I was shocked when they mutilated Isabel Lopez! But when the film ended, there was a standing ovation that seemed to last thirty minutes, *talagang palakpakan lang sila*, and *si Direk, parang maiyak-iyak siya!*"

"Direk Dante is one of the hardest people to work for. *Mahirap kasi ang style niya*, but I'm happy that what he's taught me about acting, I've been able to use it in other projects. My theater background didn't really help in working with him; *ayaw niya ng overacting.*"

Aside from appearing in *Kinatay*, Mercedes has continued to maintain her status as one of the most prolific young actresses working in independent film and theater today.





*"Audiences now are more educated and aware, but it doesn't end there. When you're aware of something, you have to learn to understand and appreciate it."*

From left to right, the cast and crew of *Kinatay*:  
Director Brillante Mendoza, Maria Isabel Lopez,  
Production Designer Harle Alan Alcasid,  
Art Director Cris Garrido, Mercedes Cabral



## Jeffrey Jeturian

Following his pictorial, the creator of *Kubrador* shared with us that his road to becoming an award-winning director was one he travelled the old fashioned way, by paying his dues to climb the ranks of film production. "I took up Broad Comm in school, in UP. Right after school, I was taken in as a production assistant of Marilou Diaz-Abaya, but it was always my childhood dream to become director. From being a PA, I became script supervisor for Viva Films, and then art director, production designer... until the time of *pito-pito* films (low-budget movies shot in seven days). So I pitched a project to Mother Lily and we started filming that a year after it was approved. The title of my first film was *Sana Pag-ibig Na*.

"We're in exciting times now, *nag-crop* up *yung mga bagong* filmmakers, like Dante (Brillante) Mendoza, who is a contemporary of mine. We worked together when we were still production designers. There are a lot of young people now who can do their films early on, unlike in my time, when we had to wait *halos* lifetime before we could fulfill our dreams of being directors. That was the time of 35mm, and not just anybody was given a break to do a film because doing films cost millions, it's business!

"*Ngayon*, anyone can just pick up a camera and shoot their own films. *Swerte ang mga* filmmakers *ngayon* because early on, they can practice their craft and become better. Whether or not they can become great, *pareho lang yan* in our time: there were several of us who wanted to do films, but there were only a few who became good at it. For this new generation, there are those who will do crap, and there are those who will do brilliant work. For those who really want to become directors, they should go for it; if you really want something badly, there's no way *na hindi matutupad yun*. Especially now, with the advent of digital filmmaking, *madali mo malaman kung pwede kang maging magaling na director o hindi*."

So what's next for Jeffrey Jeturian? "Mostly, I'm doing television work now, I've done two soaps for ABS-CBN, but I'm scrounging around for material to follow up *Kubrador*. A lot of people have pitched screenplays, but after *Kubrador*, I have to come up with something to better, or at least match (in quality) for a follow up film. *Nahihirapan ako ngayon* (laughs), but I'm searching!"

"*Ngayon, anyone can just pick up a camera and shoot their own films. Swerte ang mga filmmakers ngayon because early on, they can practice their craft and become better.*"





## Topel Lee

"I got my start in music videos then short film, and eventually I was able to make my first feature length," says Topel Lee, a director known for his excellent sense of visual style and cinematography in films like *Dilim*, *Ouija* and *Sundo*, as well as music videos for bands like Bamboo (*Hallelujah*) and Kamikazee (*Doobeedoobeedoo*).

"I took up Visual Communication at Fine Arts in UP, but I studied filmmaking at Mowelfund. *Magaling ang mga* teachers *ko* at that time: Raymond Red, Yam Laranas, Rox Lee. I learned a lot from them." Later on, it was a good thing for us *na nagkaroon ng* music channel—it was our big break! *Pinapalabas ang mga* works *namin sa* MTV, and that's where we got to experiment. The thing about music videos is, you have freedom, you can be as experimental as you like, unlike in filmmaking where you're bound by producers, who have their own ideas or suggestions.

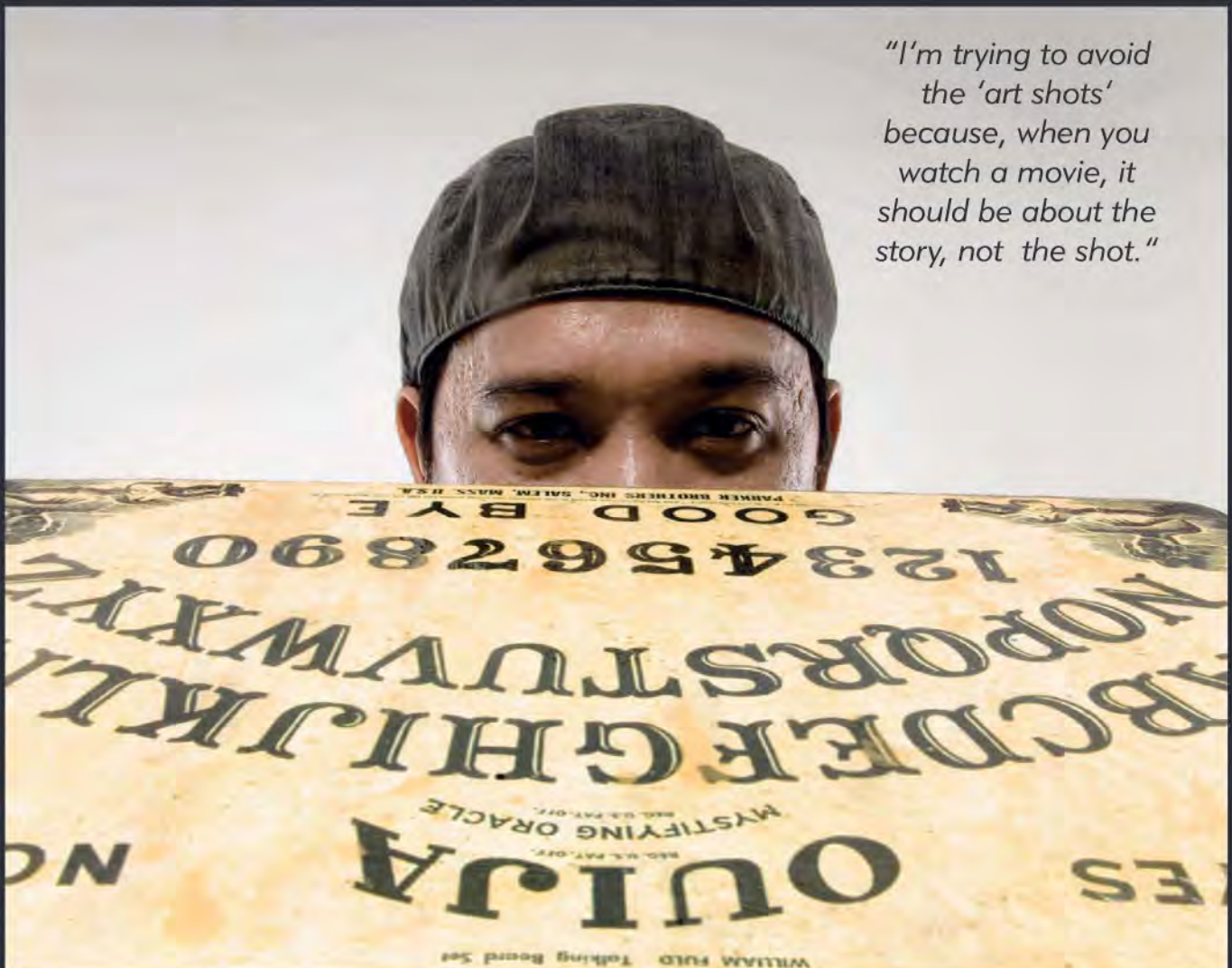
"My visual communication background very much helps my filmmaking, especially in composition of shots; I really get to use balancing of objects and lighting. But there a lot of directors who didn't come from Fine Arts *na magaling din*, so for me, it's a plus that I learned those things in school.

"On the digital revolution, I think it comes down to usage *talaga*.

Now it's easier for you to shoot and edit with the digital gadgets, and production is faster paced, so I think I'm lucky that I came into the industry at this time, because the old way was so expensive. For me, especially with my first film, *Dilim*, I used a P2 and I was able to do it cheap, so that's the advantage of digital.

"On the positive side, these days, you can get the acting you want—the guys working now are so professional, they can cry easily, etcetera—which makes it easier for me, because I'm a visual director, I'm more about the visuals and the framing and positioning; I'm still practicing getting the nuances of the characters, *pinapagaralan ko pa yun*. You can see when you watch *Ouija*, I tried to bring the nuances out from my actors because it can't just be about the visuals, it has to about the story. I'm trying to avoid the 'art shots' and the 'beautiful shots' because, when you watch the movie, it should be about the story, not the shot.

"Filmmaking is about persistence, the persistence of pushing. Filmmaking isn't an easy job, *hindi siya madaling trabaho*, but if you love storytelling, you just really have to have that passion. It's the same with photography. If you want to be a photographer, you start out working with no talent fees, but if you're good at it, in the end, *hahanapin ka*."



"I'm trying to avoid the 'art shots' because, when you watch a movie, it should be about the story, not the shot."



Clockwise from  
Top: Blue Lagoon,  
Jack Sparrow,  
Cosmopolitan



## Cinematic Concoctions

By Hank Palenzuela

I remember the teaser for *Sex in the City*, the movie, from not too long ago. The four New York gals sipping Cosmopolitans out of fine-stemmed cocktail glasses—one of the four asks, “These are really good. Why did we ever stop drinking these?” Another answers, “Because everyone else was.” Truer words were never spoken.

This bartender was never a fan of the HBO series, so it's no surprise that I never saw the movie. That being that, *Sex in the City* was a phenomenon one could not easily avoid. I had a girlfriend who constantly pestered me to watch it with her. Lucky for me, working in a bar means working at night, and if memory serves me, Tuesday nights were when the episodes aired. Well into its second season, I had customers, mostly female and a few gay men as well, ordering Cosmopolitans at the bar. The bar I work out of didn't have cranberry juice, so I didn't have to mix any. After a while, I would get comments and not-so-subtle suggestions that we should get cranberry juice, if only to appease the tide of new cosmopolitan converts. We never had cranberry juice at the bar.

Not so with other establishments. There was a club in Makati, the now defunct Flute, which did have cranberry juice and took the Cosmopolitan craze a couple steps further. Tuesday night was *Sex in the City* night at Flute. They had a TV set up at the bar so their patrons (and matrons) could watch the show while knocking back a few. As long as the show was on, Cosmopolitans were half-price.

One Tuesday, I had the night off and my girlfriend and I were at Flute. Not wanting to sit through an entire episode with a bar full of *Sex in the City* fans glued to the TV, I buzzed a friend of mine, Mahar, who lived in the building next door. He, like myself, was not a fan of the series neither. I invited him to come down and hang with me for the duration of the show. His reply went something like, “Dude! You're kidding, right? Tonight is the season-ender special! Four episodes back-to-back-to-back-to-back!” Finding this out made me want his company even more at the club. I begged and cajoled but he wouldn't budge. His final answer was, “No way, amigo. Too many damn Cosmo's.”

Thank you, Carrie, Samantha, Charlotte and Miranda.



### COSMOPOLITAN

1 shot vodka  
½ shot triple sec  
1 shot cranberry juice  
½ shot lime juice

Throw ingredients into a shaker with cracked ice (not crushed, you don't want to water it down). Shake it like you were in bed with Samantha and strain into a Martini glass. Twist a lemon peel to release the oil from the lemon skin and that is your garnish as well. Some forgo the lemon twist and just add a stemmed maraschino cherry. A Lychee-politan is a variation on this cocktail that both Major and I like. Substitute lychee juice for the cranberry, and use ¼ shot of lime juice instead of the ½ shot. No lemon twist, just a lychee fruit to garnish.

When I first heard of the cocktail, Blue Lagoon, images of Brooke Shields in the movie with the same title flashed through my mind. I don't know if the drink came before the movie, or the drink was a mixologist's homage to the movie... or maybe just an homage to its lead actress... (Insert thought bubble here: a teenaged Brooke Shields in a grass skirt...)

I have borne witness to the fact she's been the topic of many a bar conversation, and *Blue Lagoon* is uttered not long after her name is mentioned. Okay, so once in awhile Andre Agassi's name pops up. Then there's that post-partum thing and Brooke on antidepressants. Oh and let's try not to forget her forgettable TV series and equally forgettable movies. Did someone say *Brenda Starr*? It's almost like an unwritten rule, if you're talking about Brooke Shields, you just gotta throw *Blue Lagoon* in there somewhere. Boys will be boys. (Thought bubble #2: a teenaged Brooke Shields in a grass skirt, her long hair covering her naked breasts...)



### BLUE LAGOON

1 ½ shot of vodka  
½ shot of blue curacao  
White grape juice  
An orange slice



Place 3 or 4 ice cubes in a highball glass (Usually it's a 10oz tall glass. I like the pilsner glass for this drink, it's tall and has a sexy curve just like the young Brooke Shields.) Add the ingredients over ice in the order given above and stir gently. Garnish with the half orange slice on the glass rim. White grape juice not being readily available here (and most certainly not available on the tropical island/lagoon Ms. Shields was shipwrecked with what's-his-face), I substitute pineapple juice. If I'm feeling a bit fancy maybe a cocktail umbrella punched through the orange slice. (Don't think we have space for another thought bubble... But I'm sure you can Google and ogle her pics online. Go on. You know the key words: Blue Lagoon, Brooke Shields. You can pick this mag up again when you're done.)

**H**ave you seen the new version of *Alfie* with Jude Law? I know I haven't. But a schoolteacher friend of mine has. She swears that the drink Jude Law and Susan Sarandon were preparing in the apartment before the implied bonking was absinthe. How does an elementary schoolteacher know it was absinthe? Hmm... Don't all elementary schoolteachers know how to prepare absinthe? Jury's still out on that last question, but the way the movie scene was described to me goes a little something like this... Law, Sarandon and a lot of sexual tension were all in an apartment. They were preparing a drink with sugar cubes, fire and a green liquid. Any bartender worth his weight in tips would say that the drink was absinthe. Apparently, so would grade school teachers.

Absinthe is one drink that has a special place in my heart. It has history, mystery, notoriety. A bunch of really cool people drank (or still drink) absinthe; Vincent Van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Anais Nin, Henry Miller, Ernest Hemingway, Alistair Crowley, Johnny Depp, Eminem, a.k.a. the real Slim Shady, and Razorback's Kevin Roy, to name a few. It's been legal, illegal and legalized once again. I enjoy preparing it almost as much as I enjoy imbibing it. Before I go on, can I get a "Woo hoo!" for the Green Fairy that makes us all feel a little "Woo hoo!"?



#### ABSINTHE

- 1 shot Absinthe
- Water
- 1 sugar cube

You will need an absinthe "spoon." This utensil looks like a small cake server

with different shaped holes cut into the triangular part of the spoon. Not being a common bar tool this piece is not an easy thing to find if you're looking to purchase one. They are only really used for one thing, setting yourself up with an absinthe. Some brands of absinthe have a free "spoon" that comes with the purchase of a bottle.

**Traditional absinthe preparation:** (probably what they did in *Alfie*) Take the "spoon" and place it over a rock glass or scotch glass with half a shot to a shot of water. Place a sugar cube on the spoon and trickle the shot of absinthe over the cube, letting the glass catch the spill over. Your sugar cube should now be well-soaked with the highly flammable absinthe. Bring an open flame to the cube and light it. Wait for the flaming sugar cube to dissolve into the glass through the spoon. Stir the ingredients. You can add ice if you prefer this drink cold. For a less potent drink, you can cut it by adding water.

An alternative to the absinthe "spoon" and sugar cube is a regular teaspoon and regular sugar. Hold a teaspoon of sugar over a rock glass with water. Trickle your shot of absinthe on to the sugar. Bring an open flame to the teaspoon lighting the sugar. Tilt teaspoon at an angle so you have the burning sugar slowly dripping into the glass. If you do this right it should look really cool.

Being one of my faves, I have to throw in yet another variation on absinthe: the absinthe tonic. 3 or 4 ice cubes in a rock glass. Substitute water with  $\frac{1}{4}$  shot of tonic water and  $\frac{1}{4}$  shot of lime juice. Do the whole spoon-sugar-absinthe-trickle-fire process. Stir and throw in a slice of lime to garnish. That's how this bartender likes his Green Fairy. Did I mention you should take extra care when playing with fire? Please don't try mixing any alcoholic beverages involving fire if you've had a few to drink already... That "Woo hoo!" could turn into a "Boo hoo!"

**"Yo ho! Yo ho! A pirate's life for me!"** That's a line sung from one of my Top 5 all-time favorite movies, *Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl*. Actually, I really, really, very much LIKE all three movies in the trilogy. I felt Johnny Depp's singing in the first movie was much better than his efforts in *Sweeney Todd*. Okay, I admit it; I'm a hard-core Captain Jack Sparrow fan and I would walk the plank to prove it. Luckily for me nobody does that kind of thing anymore nowadays. Instead, as a tribute to my favorite swashbuckler, I have concocted a beverage in his honor. A drink worthy of all the grog in the Caribbean.

So how does a bartender go about making up a drink... and for an (in) famous pirate no less? (Ah, you have heard of him) If I mess up, I could get shot

or have my tongue cut out, or even worse, get shot, have my tongue cut out and get it shot too.

For starters I would need an alcohol base to start with. What better base than rum? Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum, me and my mates always say. What to mix with the rum? Not soft drinks, that wouldn't fit the period, and not very piratey. A fruit juice... something native to the Caribbean... something like... coconuts! In the second *Pirates* movie, *Dead Man's Chest*, coconuts play a part in his escaping a tribe of cannibals and also aid him in getting the heart of Davey Jones. Only Captain Jack could have pulled it off with coconuts. Aye, it's got to be coconuts. Problem is coconut milk doesn't go with rum neither does lambranog. (Believe me, I found that out the hard way.) Then of course there is such a thing as coconut rum! Jack does ask, "Why is the rum always gone?" The Captain needs more rum. So more rum it is.



#### CAPTAIN JACK SPARROW

- 1 shot dark rum
- 1 shot coconut rum
- 1-2 dashes of lime juice
- Lime slice

Place 4 or 5 ice cubes in a rock glass (it's hot in the Caribbean). Dark rum goes in over the ice (Tanduay 5 Years works best with this drink, Jack Sparrow swears by it) then the coconut rum next (Malibu works best and it actually says 'CARIBBEAN RUM' on the label). Add a dash or two of lime juice and a slice of lime to garnish (a bit of citrus to keep the scurvy at bay). I've tested the drink myself, as have other brave souls. Surprisingly, the rum base and coconut rum mixer fares quite well on the palette (I thank my stars my tongue wasn't cut out). After my crew of taste testers found out what I put in the Captain Jack Sparrow, many of them wanted to start a mutiny... "Traydor!" being the word most used to describe my creation. "Traitor" is close enough to 'pirate' for me... Just don't tell Captain Jack I said it.

I guess that's it for now. 'Til next month... fix yourself a drink, pop a DVD in the player, put your feet up and press 'PLAY'. Savvy?





# REEL ★ REVOLUTION

## THE SAGA OF PHILIPPINE CINEMA

BY JOEY HERRERA

**A**sk anyone around you when they last saw a movie, and you will likely hear the title of a Hollywood blockbuster. If you ask them about the last Filipino movie they saw, they would likely give the title of a movie that was screened last year, or worse, the year before. Worst is, they will answer your question with: "I can't even remember if the last local movie I saw was on cable, pirated, or in an actual movie house!"

This is not something limited to a certain demographic. Some people would actually be embarrassed to watch something local, given its reputation of being all slapstick and bubblegum romance. Others who actually want to watch local would rather save money and buy pirated DVDs.

Despite concerted efforts by the film industry and government, there is less of an audience for local movies, and there are fewer local movies being made very year. There were about 56 films shown theatrically in 2006 and 30 in 2007. Even accounting for statistical error margins, these numbers are very low compared to the early history of Philippine cinema, when we were second only to Japan.

The national government enforced a system that offered tax rebates to well-made films (only 9 out of the 150 movies qualified between 2003-2006). President Arroyo appealed to Local Government Units in 2001 to lower entertainment taxes to entice more viewers with cheaper movie tickets. Obviously, not everyone followed that plea. Regular raids in known piracy hubs (particularly Quiapo, which experienced raids almost daily at the height of the Hayden Kho sex scandal issue) have not succeeded in curbing the appetite for cheaper movie sources.

In the midst of all of this, independent movies continue to attract attention. Most of this is because the indies continue to garner international acclaim, leading to media attention and fueling a growing interest. Cinemas such as Robinsons Galleria and Gateway Mall patronize and screen these movies, encouraging interested audiences who are not willing to travel to CCP or the UP Film Center.

All of this leads one to wonder: can independent productions tempt an already disinterested Filipino audience?



## WHO STILL WATCHES FILIPINO MOVIES?

The problems of movie making are not exclusive to the Philippines. Worldwide, there has been a decline in movie ticket sales. This decline started with the introduction of television, heightened by the advent of cable channels, and peaked at the height of piracy. It's a fight against technology.

One of the recent developments locally is the mass migration of dramatic stars to soap operas. While Philippine movies are in the decline, seasoned and talented actors are moving to what appears to be the bankable medium. Now, we can see thespians we've come to expect only in movies appearing every night during prime time.

Television has more than shows vying for the audience's attention. There are also cable channels piping in movies 24 hours a day, without commercials. They range from Hollywood to local movies, modern blockbusters to classics, and even some original and art films that viewers can watch for the first time.

Globalization has also been doing a number on our local cinema. The influx of Hollywood movies has basically been nonstop and largely unregulated. We are the dumping ground of straight-to-DVD movies, like Jessica Simpson's *Major Movie Star*. It was never released in the US, but enjoyed a run in local cinemas.

Big blockbusters inundate us with massive publicity and systematically beat local movies shown at the same time. Aside from Hollywood, other cinemas are also starting to enter the scene, with our collective fascination with Korean and Japanese cultures, their TV shows and movies are already capturing more audiences.

Changes in the movie theaters themselves have triggered a change in the industry. SM Prime Holdings

Inc., the largest cinema chain operator, owns 146 screens through its SM Supermalls alone. All SM Cinemas only show family-friendly movies, with ratings from GP, PG, PG-13 to R-13, effectively stemming the distribution channel of movies dealing with adult themes, even the good ones.

Ticket prices have also increased due to the changing economy. With the cost reaching almost 200 pesos, some Filipinos have not been inside a movie theater in three years. This has directly contributed to the greater problem of piracy.

Old-school piracy typically provided poor copies of the original movie. Cameras were used to capture movie screenings, providing stilted reproductions that included the shuffling as the pirate adjusted the camera, audience members standing up to go to the restroom, and the reactions from the audience. Despite these flaws, the copies were sold at almost a third of ticket price,

attracting movie audiences who cannot afford to go to the cinema. The movie theater experience was superior, until the Internet came.

Internet piracy first plagued the music industry, with the widespread use of the file-sharing application Napster. Metallica filed suit against the owners in 2000, earning a half-hearted victory as similar services like Kazaa and Limewire popped up. As Internet bandwidth and service providers improved, the problem started making a dent in movie sales.

Torrent networks and applications were developed. The downloading process became more efficient. The pirates could use better (and smaller) cameras to capture movie screenings. DVD screeners (often circulated by production houses to release copies of the movie to award-giving bodies and critics), original DVDs and leaked workprints (unfinished but working copies of the movie) were ripped and circulated online. Aside from

downloading, people can also watch these movies online via live streaming.

It is not unnatural that the largest movie-making machine was the first to be affected by Internet piracy. Hollywood movies are often released later in other countries, and movie buffs eager for the latest blockbuster will have no trouble finding copies online within two days (sometimes even less) of a film's US release.

Local movie pirates have not reached that level of technological sophistication. Most have to contend with the hidden-camera trick. Nevertheless, there are already torrents of Philippine movies circulating online. These range from recent films (*Kimmy Dora*) to classics (*Batch 81*) and limited releases (*Serbis* and *Fuschia*).

The older films are likely rips from VHS, VCD and DVD releases. The more recent ones are culled from good-quality, camera-captured pirated DVDs. They are



Mark Gil in Mike Deleon's seminal *Batch '81*



typically circulated by one Filipino and picked up and spread by other netizens. Most of these torrent files are even associated with certain forums or blogs wherein people can request uploads of different Filipino movies.

## THE COLONIZED CINEMA

Philippine cinema is closely linked to its colonial roots. The first movies shown in the Philippines were in 1897 at Escolta. Most were imports of early European documentaries, when experimentation with film cameras was mostly limited to daily life or natural disasters.

It wasn't until 1898 that theater owner Antonio Ramos decided to make films of his own. He had originally imported a Lumiere Cinematograph to show 30 films from Paris. The Spaniard shot scenes in Manila to make *Fiesta de Quiapo* (*Quiapo Fiesta*), *Esceñas Callejeras* (*Street Scenes*), *Panorama de Manila* (*Manila Landscape*) and *Puente de España* (*Bridge of Spain*).

It was during the American occupation that commercial movie theaters came into vogue. Cine Walgraph opened in 1900 at Intramuros, named for its British owner. A Spaniard opened the next one in Quiapo: the *Gran Cinematografo Parisien*. The first

Filipino cinema owner was theater backdrop painter Jose Jimenez. He opened the Cinematografo Rizal in Azcarraga at Tutuban in 1903.

Silent movies arrived with the influx of American goods and soldiers. These foreigners also started making movies featuring their involvement in local customs and streetscapes. As time passed, the potential of the film medium for propaganda was recognized. The Americans established film distribution routes in the country, even as they imported technology and technique.

The earliest Filipino-made movies are based on folklore and *zarzuelas*. The first one was *Dalagang Bukid*, made by Jose Nepumoceno in 1919, derived from musical play written by Hermogenes Ilagan. Productions tended to follow the lines of Hollywood genres, with an underlying bent to maintain the status quo and prevent the burgeoning of anticolonial ideas. Movies from Hollywood reigned over the local scene.

Julian Manansala's *Patria Amore* (*Beloved Country*) was released in the 1930s, ushering a wave of movies that were more adventurous in terms of movie theme. It was almost banned because of its anti-Spanish tone. *Magkaisang Landas* and *Yaman*

*ng Hirap* marked the first local films made by a woman: Carmen Concha.

When the Japanese occupied the Philippines, propaganda movies again ruled the nation. Filipinos could not abide the imported movies, so the occupiers forged allegiances with local directors to make films centered on Filipino-Japanese collaboration. Consequently, theater experienced a revival as out-of-work movie casts and crews staged plays at empty cinema houses.

## MAKING THE MACHINE

After World War II, Filipino movies thrived, with the war genre at its center. Patriotic movies touted the bravery of the Filipino soldier: *Garrison 13*, *Dugo ng Bayan* (*The Country's Blood*), *Walang Kamatayan* (*Deathless*) and *Guerilya*, all in 1946.

The 1950s also marked the rise of the big studios and their stables of off- and on-screen talents. The Big Four were LVN Pictures, Sampaguita Pictures, Premiere Productions and Lebran International, producing a combined 350 films a year, making the country second only to Japan in terms of movie production.

Aside from quantity, local films were also increasing in quality. Most movie themes still centered on imported themes from Hollywood, but



From left to right: *Dalagang Bukid* (1919), directed by Jose Nepumoceno for Malayan Films, was based on a musical play of the same name and starred Atang de la Rama and Marcellano Ilagan; National Artist for Film Lamberto Avallana's tragic romance, *Badjao* (1957); Tony Ferrer in *Interpol* (1965), which introduced Philippine audiences to Agent X-44, as portrayed by Tony Ferrer.





## The earliest Filipino-made movies are based on folklore and zarzuelas. The first one was *Dalagang Bukid*, made by Samuel Ilaga in 1919, from a musical play written by Hermogenes Ilagan.

technique and execution were moving away from the style of "filmed plays" of the previous era. Thematically, there was an array of choices.

A steady stream of comedies featured Pugo and Tugo, Ugak and Pugak, as well as Chiquito. There were also romantic starrers and musicals with Paraluman, Nida Blanca, Nestor de Villa, Rogelio de la Rosa and Carmen Rosales. Social and political issues were touched with Lamberto Avellana's *Anak Dalita* (1956), *Badjao* (1957) and Manuel Silos' *Biyaya ng Lupa* (1959). Action movies were not to be ignored with Ben Rubio, Fred Montilla and a young Eddie Garcia.

During this golden era of Philippine cinema, the rising production value caught the eye of international award-giving bodies. *Genghis Khan* (1952) by Manuel Conde was screened at the Venice and Cannes Film Festival. It was the first Asian movie there, and is credited with inspiring the Hollywood version (featuring a grossly miscast John Wayne in the title role).

Despite the high local production rate, wider distribution channels for Hollywood movies meant that Filipino movies were only shown in two theaters: Life and Dalisay, both located in Manila. While this would change over time, the studio system of the 50s fostered a star system framework that exists to this day.

Stars were discovered and housed in one of the four studios, where they were groomed and dressed for stardom. Movies were made to highlight their strengths and create pairings ("love teams") between viable leading men and women. Exclusivity contracts were in place, ensuring that they would stick to one of the four studios, each of which had their specialty genre.

### THE LAST DECADES OF FILM

The slow rumble of change appeared in the 60s. Foreign trends washed

up on Philippine shores with westerns and spies taking the lead, and rock-and-roll music creating a counterculture with Beatlemania. This created a crop of look-alike movies, which maintained the Hollywood formula. Teen flicks touted love teams such as Nora Aunor-Tirso Cruz III, and Vilma Santos-Edgar Mortiz (replacing the prior decade's Susan Rocas-Eddie Guttierrez and Amalia Fuentes-Romeo Vasquez).

Aside from the rivalry of the two love teams (fueled by the studios as well as die-hard Noranians and Vilmanians), ticket sales were also driven by action movies that borrowed heavily from Hollywood models. Case in point is Tony Ferrer, the James Bond of the Philippines. He starred in almost two dozen films as Tony Falcon, Agent X-44. The character has been immortalized in movies since 1965 up to the 2007 *Agent X44* starring Vhong Navarro, wherein Falcon symbolically gave his blessing as the original character.

Action movies seemingly recycled titles and plots of Hollywood originals. But they were often able to temper this with insights into society's problems of poverty, syndicates, police brutality and political corruption. This signaled the popularity of action films, through to the 80s and mid-90s.

Real change in Philippine cinema did not happen until Martial Law. Ferdinand Marcos sought to have all Filipino films preach the merits of his New Society, establishing the Board of Censors for Modern Pictures (BCMP) in the process. All scripts had to be approved before they were filmed, depictions of perceived immorality and injustice had to be appended by a claim that the current administration has abolished them.

In spite of this, or possibly because of it, a new crop of directors and filmmakers established a new kind of film, one that shone a light on social

realities and political issues. Notable ones were Lino Brocka's *Maynila: Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag* (1975), Ishmael Bernal's *Relasyon* (1981), Mike de Leon's *Sis. Stella L* (1982) and Peque Gallaga's *Oro, Plata, Mata*.

An alternative cinema was also born. One of the earliest was Kidlat Tahimik's *Mababangong Bangungot* (*Perfumed Nightmares*) in 1977, which won the International Critic's Prize at the Berlin Film Festival.

The University of the Philippines Film Center and the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines (ironically headed by presidential daughter Imee Marcos from 1981 to 1986) fostered new directions in local cinema. This led to films such as Ishmael Bernal's *Himala* (1982), Nick De Ocampo's *Oliver* (1983), Raymond Red's *Ang Magpakailanman* (1983) and Abbo Q. dela Cruz's *Misteryo sa Tuwa* (1984).

Violence in the nation was depicted realistically, sometimes even leading to the films being banned in local movie houses. Even as late as 1989, the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board ruled that Lino Brocka's *Orapronobis* (*Fight for Us*) would not be run commercially due to its graphic scenes of violence, anti-military and anti-government theme.

Adult-themed movies appeared to be on the rise in the late 90s to early 2000s. This time could be marked by the rise of the career of Rosanna "Osang" Rocas, who served as the poster-child for the artistic adult movie. Her dramatic turns in movies such as *Ligaya ang Itawag Mo Sa Akin* (1997), *Ang Lalaki sa Buhay ni Selya* (1997), *Ang Babae sa Bintana* (1998), *Curacha*, *Ang Babaing Walang Pahinga* (1998) and *La Vida Rosa* (2001) gained critical acclaim. The movies themselves mirrored social issues of poverty, prostitution and social norms and attitudes on sex. Other movies in the same vein were *Pila-Balde* (1999), *Live Show* (2000) and *Tuhog* (2001).



The popularity of these films led to a rise in adult and soft-porn movies, hiding behind the mask of the art film. While this genre has been present in Philippine cinema for quite some time (with its precursors: the *bomba* films of the 60s and the 'wet look' of the Martial Law era), the films were beginning to push the envelope. In time, any underlying theme or story of the movie was lost on an audience who primarily wanted to be excited at seeing naked flesh.

From Osang, it was an easy transition to Joyce Jimenez, Assunta de Rossi and Aubrey Miles. Then it was the much-awaited adult debut of former child stars Maui Taylor (*TGIS*), Katya Santos (*Ang TV*) and Rica Peralejo (*Ang TV*). Enter the Viva Hot Babes: Asia Agcaoili, Juliana Palermo and numerous other sexy starlets who have faded from the industry but remain visible via double features in underground movie houses.

The rise of the sexy movie was stemmed by a business decision. In the third quarter of 2004, the SM Prime Holdings, Inc. decided that they would stop screening any movies rated above R-13. This was an effort to maintain a family-friendly appeal and block the growing trend of sexy movies. It effectively stopped soft porn movies from taking over the industry, but it effectively narrowed the market for good quality adult movies as well.

In the 1980s, the Philippines produced over 300 movies a year. That was its peak. Regal and Viva Films, known for producing teen starrers (*Bagets*) and horror movies (*Shake, Rattle and Roll*), as well as fostering fresh talent, such as the Regal Babies (*That's Entertainment* and *Gwapings*) have reduced the number of films they have been producing.

TV stations ABS-CBN and GMA

now have their own film studio affiliations, with Star Cinema and GMA Films. Both studios have released less than 20 movies each for the last 2 years. Most of them follow the studio-system model, acting as vehicles of their own TV talents and serving as money-generating ventures aimed to expand the marketability and profitability of their respective stables of actors.

Audiences are disillusioned and piracy is rampant. Local movies often feature a recycled set of themes. The romance genre shows lovers overcoming barriers that are typically based on social standing (*A Very Special Love* and *For the First Time*). Local cinema has largely given up on straight action movies. Slapstick comedies feature the exploits of dysfunctional families or liberated women (*My Monster Mom* and *Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat*).

Horror seems to be one genre where local cinema is evolving (*T2* made \$430,776 on its opening weekend, and *Ouija* beat *Ratatouille* and *The Simpsons Movie* to become the highest-grossing movie from July 25 to 29, 2007 with Php 35,495,144). The improvements in the genre can be attributed to the popularity of Japanese horror movies such as *The Ring*, *The Grudge* and *Dark Water*, even among American audiences.

Hollywood is dominating the local movie landscape. More people are starting to prefer watching TV shows and movie cable channels in the comfort of their own home because of the rising cost of living. Philippine cinema appears to be in steady decline.

#### **RISE OF THE MODERN INDIE**

Independent cinema is one term that has been thrown around a lot lately. There are several misconceptions surrounding the term. Some of the misinformation may have been caused by trends in the medium.

It can also be due to personal biases. One common fallacy is that indie movies tackle primarily gay themes. Another is that they are all experimental art films with themes and storylines that are meant only for intellectuals and film critics.

These have contributed to the general ignorance of the masses when it comes to independent movies. The industry already suffers a lack of proper distribution channels and low advertising and marketing funds. It also has to contend with the public's general apathy and unawareness towards indie movies.

At the very core of the term, independent movies refer to films that are made outside of the large film-production studios. This affords filmmakers greater creative freedom while restricting their budget. This definition can mean anything from student movies, self-produced films and those backed by smaller financiers. Indie films can be experimental, documentaries or animated. They can be short films or full-length features of comedy, drama, action, sci-fi or horror.

Indie films are not new to local cinema. Its earlier incarnations are the 80's alternative films of Kidlat Tahimik and Raymond Red to 90's *pito-pito* films, which were shot and edited in around 7 days (typically financed by Golden Harvest Productions, like Jeffrey Jetturian's *Pila-Balde* and Lav Diaz's *Hubad Sa Ilalim Ng Buwan*).

Recent indies run the gamut from stories about change (Gil Portes' *Mga Munting Tinig*, 2002), comedies (Mark Meily's *Crying Ladies*, 2003) and realistic dramas (Maryo J. de los Reyes' *Magnifico*, 2003).

An independent full-length documentary also made a splash in 2003. Ramona S. Diaz made

**Hollywood is dominating the local movie landscape. More people are starting to prefer watching TV shows and movie cable channels in the comfort of their own home because of the rising cost of living. Philippine cinema appears to be in steady decline.**





*Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros* (2006), directed by Aureus Solito, won the Special Jury Prize at the 2005 Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival.

*Imelda* for commercial consumption, but the former First Lady initially stopped the release. Mrs. Marcos later relented, under the condition that it not be labeled a documentary.

One factor would help boost the existence of independent cinema, making it a viable complement and alternative to mainstream movies. Technology, which has already made it easier to go around the legitimate movie distribution channels, would now boost the fledgling art form.

The increasing sophistication and availability of digital filmmaking equipment makes it cheaper and easier to shoot and edit movies. Projector technology has also improved to the point that cinemas are able to screen digital formats.

Cris Pablo's homosexual melodrama *Duda* was released in 2003, as one of the first all-digital movies that was shot and produced for wide commercial screening. 2005's *Pusang Gala* is another digital movie with gay overtones, directed by Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil.

Versatile director Peque Gallaga (*Magic Temple*, 1996; *Gangland*, 1998; and *Ang Kabit ni Mrs. Montero*, 1999) also went digital for his 2005 movie-fanboy

comedy *Pinoy Blonde*. The movie was financed by Unitel, which backed a similar film the following year in *Nasaan si Francis*. The latter is based on an Ilonggo play, *Diin na si Francis*, and directed by Gabriel Fernandez. Also in 2006 was the commercial release of Cinemalaya feature *Saan Nagtatago si Happiness*, by Florida Bautista. It was shown in March of the same year in all SM digital theaters. These movies have garnered countless international acclaim. Showcased, nominated, praised and commended in Berlin, Cannes, Venice and other venues are Aureus Solito's *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros* (2005), Jeffrey Jeturian's *Kubrador* (2006), John Torres' *Todo Todo Terros* (2007), Jade Castro's *Endo* (2007) and Jim Libiran's *Tribu* (2007).

The international spotlight is now on a director comparatively unknown in his own country. Brillante Mendoza has made nine movies between 2005 and 2009. He was already nominated for the Palme D'Or for his 2008 film *Serbis*. His *Kinatay* in 2009 won him the Prix de la Mise en Scene (Best Director) at the Cannes Film Festival.

Independent Filmmaker Ryan Diño [writer, editor, producer and director:

*Ang Ibig Sabihin ng 'OK Lang'* (2009); Producer, *Kimmy Dora* music video (2009); Production Manager: *Sabungero* (2009) and *Namets!* (2008)] on the difference of indie and studio productions:

"It's all about efficiency. Indie films average at 10 shooting days, while mainstream movies can take up to 30. Naturally, those who do mainstream get paid more just based on the numbers. But based on the workload and skills, indie filmmakers have to cover more bases because they can't afford as many people. So in one project I could be the PM but also the driver, PA, audio playback, et cetera. It's

harder, so you get more creative in maximizing your resources. For short films of friends, I have no reservations about doing pro bono work."

## THE INDIE EFFECT

At every turning point in cinema, the big studio systems have made an effort to envelop successful new directors. Some filmmakers accept this and join the establishment in an effort to change it from within (Jeffrey Jeturian, *Bridal Shower*, 2004 for Seiko Films). However, the very capitalist nature of the movie-making machine hinders any radical change. Other filmmakers remain on the outskirts, determined to carve out a niche audience of their own (Kidlat Tahimik, from the very beginning).

The abolition of the studio system has given everyone in the movie industry flexibility when it comes to doing projects. It is no longer uncommon for mainstream talents to be seen doing indie movies. Indie talents are also able to transition easily into mainstream roles.

A prime example is the so-called Prince of Philippine Independent Cinema, Coco Martin. The actor started out seeking the limelight in the traditional way, by joining a major network's talent pool. He





A scene from Soxy Topacio's *Ded Na Si Lolo*, the Philippine entry for Best Foreign Film at the 2010 Academy Awards

started out as an exclusive GMA talent, but later moved to ABS-CBN as a part of Star Circle Batch 9.

Martin didn't get the exposure he needed. So, he turned to independent movies. Through challenging roles, love scenes and headlining multiple indies, the actor had honed his chops enough to be considered for the big leagues. As the plot-turning antagonist Ramon D. Lecumberri in ABS-CBN soap opera *Tayong Dalawa*, he caught the eye of the public. He currently heads the TV version of *Nagsimula sa Puso* with Maja Salvador, Nikki Gil and Jason Abalos.

Even established mainstream stars are using their star power to garner support for their pet indie projects, highlighting indie cinema in the process. Judy Ann Santos did that for Dante Nico Garcia's 2008 film *Ploning*. It made the tour of international film festivals in 2008: the 6th Paris Cinema International Film Festival, the Hong Kong Asian Independent Film Festival, the 39th International Film Festival of India and the Asian Festival of First Films in Singapore. At the last festival, Garcia won a Best Director award while the film was nominated for Best Screenplay. *Ploning* continued its festival run in 2009: at the 20th Palm Springs International Film Festival, the For Your Consideration

program at the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, and the 10th Newport Beach Film Festival.

The country's official entry to the 2010 Oscar Awards for Best Foreign Film is another prime example. Soxy Topacio's *Ded na si Lolo* (2009) is a classic example of an independent movie headlined by competent dramatic actors who have enjoyed mainstream success.

The story centers around the wake of a family patriarch. The basic theme covers the many Filipino superstitions centered around the dead. Most were probably based on some logic which are now long-forgotten. The family scrambles to prevent mourners from wearing red, they ban house cleaning and forbid bathing under the same roof as the dead.

Like typical Filipino family movies (reminiscent of previous works such as 2000's *Tanging Yaman*), the clan rallies around the dead, conflicts arise and are all resolved before the burial. A relatively new story arc is the introduction of the gay overtone, with the final begrudging acceptance of homosexual family members. *Ded na si Lolo* is powered by performances from Roderick Paulate, Gina Alajar, Elizabeth Oropesa, Manilyn Reynes and Dick Israel as siblings at the center of the story. The supporting cast includes *Starstruck* alum Rainier Castillo, child

star and former Eat Bulaga mainstay BJ Forbes, character actor Richard Quan, and comedy staples Diego and Mosang.

The movie pokes fun at the high drama to be found at wakes, with the typical fainting, family confrontations and screaming matches. Borrowing from mainstream frameworks, it features a music-laden montage sequence of the dead, with a special appearance from Gary Granada.

Bb. Joyce Bernal's *Kimmy Dora* (2009) is one film that straddles the fence of the indie discussion. Produced by Spring Films (which has only this movie credited on IMDb) and MJM Productions (which has one more IMDb credit, *Manila*, 2009); the movie is distributed by Solar Entertainment Corporation (which distributed *Ang Pamana* in 2006, and 2009's *Wapakman*). The director herself is listed as an executive producer, along with mainstream actor Piolo Pascual.

The film was released theatrically and powered by intelligent marketing (including a fun, user-friendly website) and word of mouth. It even managed to garner lines in upscale mall cinemas. Box office results of almost PhP15 million after a week of screening show it as a commercial success.

Stylistically, it is quite similar to the director's other comedic films, such as *Booba* (2001) and *Super-B* (2002).





Piolo Pascual, flexing his acting muscles in *Manila* (2009), an homage to the works of Lino Brocka and Ishmael Bernal

Bernal has always attempted to push the bounds of comedic films (using an over-the-boob shot in *Booba*) while maintaining mass appeal. The tongue-in-cheek humor bordering on lewdness was carried over from the previously mentioned Rufa Mae Quinto starrers.

Like *Ded na si Lolo*, the movie also includes song numbers, a comedy-movie throwback from the 80s and 90s. A montage flashback is set to a cameo performance of Aiza Seguerra, and the title characters Kimmy and Dora sing and dance together at the end.

Visual puns typical of local comedies are still present, including an overused visual reference to a *Matrix* fighting scene. The script does deliver some smart lines that manage to raise the overall IQ of the film. A choice example: "*Sabi ko nang ma-miss mo ang period mo, wag lang ang meeting*," delivered succinctly by leading lady Eugene Domingo.

The main redeeming quality of the movie is actually its lead star. Domingo owns the screen with a display of raunchy wit and bravado. Acting alongside Dingdong Dantes (who was only "downgraded" for his first scene in the movie), she never looks out of place as a viable leading lady next to the actor pegged as one of the 25 Sexiest Men of the World.

### A NEW DIRECTION?

Without a doubt, indie filmmaking has been making a dent on studio films. The crossover of talent has allowed mainstream actors to hone their craft and given studios a new venue for discovering talent.

Filmmakers unsatisfied with the restrictions of studio films are given a new venue to explore uncommon themes, such as in Joel Lamangan's *Fuschia*, 2009, which centers on senior citizens played by Gloria Romero, Robert Arevalo, Eddie Garcia and Armida Siguion-Reyna.

There is also a revelation that the audience is open to new things (an ABS-CBN and Star Cinema gamble on gay themes with *In My Life* starring John Lloyd Cruz, Luis Manzano and Vilma Santos).

The basic structures of studio and independent cinema assure that both will always be present. Studios see film as entertainment, easily quantifiable in the number of movie tickets, home videos and merchandise the consumers will buy. While independent filmmakers may also want to entertain audiences (after all, films are made primarily for consumption), there is the added function of film as self-expression, and as a medium for education.

Studios seek the lowest common denominator because they want to

appeal to everyone: a simple economic principle that broadens the target market and increases the margin for profit. If you want to catch more fish, use a bigger net. Indies, on the other hand, typically cater to a niche market. Their storylines tend to appeal to a specific audience, sometimes limited to students, intellectuals and film buffs.

In spite of all this, the fact remains that a good movie is a good movie, and a good story is one that captures the imagination of everyone that sees it. International film *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) did just that. Shot digitally as an indie production and directed by Danny Boyle, it is a fairy tale set in the slums of India. Against a backdrop of religious intolerance, an organized beggars' syndicate, child prostitution and poverty, *Slumdog* is a utopian testament to a love that conquers all. Its feel-good nature powered it to commercial success while its game-show structure and style earned it critical success.

Movie houses and studios are realistic about what sells tickets. The Filipino film-going public primarily watches movies to escape. They want feel-good stories that let them forget their troubles even for just an hour or two. Studio films have the formula down to a science. Independent movies want to explore the boundaries of that science, to turn filmmaking back into an art form.

Not all indies are good, but that assumption goes double for studio films. The good ones will gain an audience and a following. Each sub-industry of Philippine cinema will find its market. Like any capitalist-consumerist construct, demand will prevail. Both indie and studio filmmakers will evolve and try to appropriate each other's effective qualities.

No matter how many indie directors succumb to the machine, new ones will crop up, ready to take to the battle. The stones they fling at the hulking mass of the mainstream will merely shape it, creating noise and drawing new audiences eager to watch and pick a side. In the end, it is that curiosity, that devotion to a part of Philippine cinema, whether indie or studio, that keeps the industry going.



Special thanks to Simon Santos of Video 48 for scans of vintage movie posters.



# Sex in Cinema



## 2009's BEST EROTIC SCENES FROM THE BIG SCREEN IN THEATERS – AND THE SMALL ONE IN YOUR LIVING ROOM

Whatever happened to sex in cinema? The simple answer is it moved to a more welcoming home on cable—especially when you consider that 2009's biggest box-office attractions include the chaste and shiny *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, *Star Trek* and *Up*. While mainstream Hollywood moviemakers persist in wooing preadolescents and grow-ups stuck in various stages of arrested development, those of us in search of edgier, more risqué and adult entertainment are happy to stay home and tune in to such Showtime and HBO fare as *True*

*Blood*, *Californication*, *Hung* and *Dexter*. Luckily, though, the sexual collisions between consenting adults haven't been completely banished from the multiplex. Not only do foreign-language films hold up their end of the erotic bargain but so do some interesting American movies such as *Two Lovers*, starring independent thinkers Joaquin Phoenix and Gwyneth Paltrow, and the raunchy, sexy screen version of Chuck Palahnuik's *Choke*, starring Sam Rockwell. And what about Jessica Biel's steamy pole dance in *Powder Blue*? As long as there are adventurous movie stars and bold directors, eroticism will not be pushed entirely to the margins. Besides, we'll always have cable.

By Stephen Rebello





### Hot Number

Ferociously sexy Penelope Cruz flies high and wild in the stylish musical *Nine* (opposite page). But with Cruz swinging half-naked on a trapeze, no one will rate her less than a 10.

### Why So Serious?

Beautifully doomed university student Penelope Cruz invites professor Ben Kingsley to take a bedroom exam well worth boning up for in *Elegy* (top left).



### Getting a Rise

In the horror comedy *Jennifer's Body* (left), a lesbian-lite romp between demonically possessed Megan Fox and Amanda Seyfried gets so heated, they levitate.

### Milk Maids

In the road-trip comedy *Sex Drive* (lower left), virginal new grad Josh Zuckerman discovers that some Amish women are buxom, friendly and available.

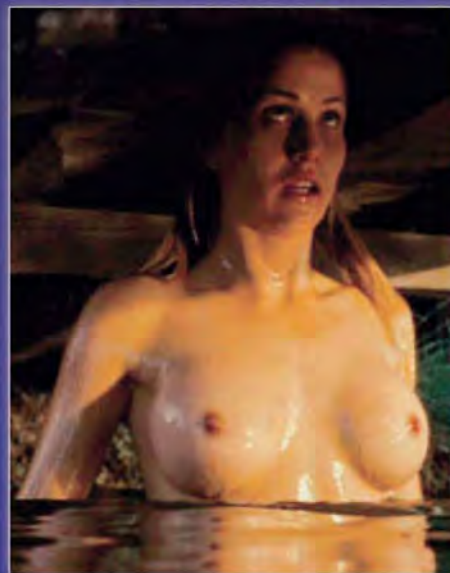


### Good Vibrations

The unrated DVD version of the merrily scatological *Van Wilder: Freshman Year* (bottom left) features one of the hero's hotties choosing from his stash of dildos.

### View to Kill

Julianna Guill's breasts steal the show in the Blu-ray version of *Friday The 13th: Killer Cut* (below), which has more sex and skin than the wimpy theatrical release.







### Higher Education

In *The Reader* (top left), Kate Winslet embarks on a sensual affair with teenager David Kross, insisting he must read great literary works to her during sex.

### A Dish Best Served Hot

In the Austrian thriller *Revanche* (above), Irina Potapenko's lavish physical charms and acting skills as a debt-ridden Ukrainian prostitute helped the movie snag an Oscar nomination for the best foreign-language film of the year.

### Boys' Town

Adrian Grenier and the boy-men of *Entourage: The Complete Fifth Season* (above left) hook up with women who are as wonderfully shallow as they are.

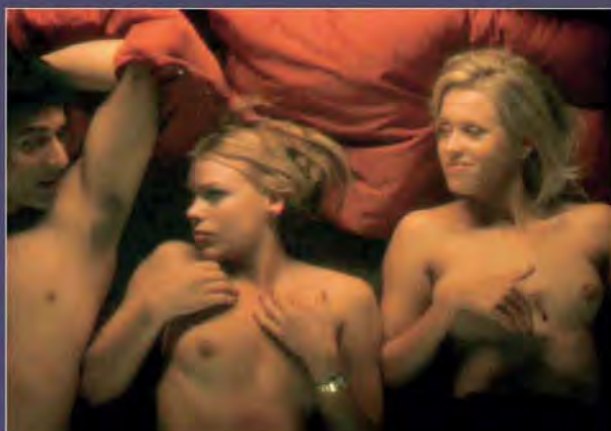
### Queen for a Day

Natalie Dormer's Anne Boleyn loses her head with Jonathan Rhys Meyers' Henry the VIII in *The Tudors: The Complete Second Season* (middle left) DVD.

### Bad Rap

Freeze-dried seductress Gwyneth Paltrow haunts and teases her emotionally battered neighbor Joaquin Phoenix in *Two Lovers* (left). He left this for a career in rap?





### Love Bites

In the bold HBO series *True Blood* (above left), the much-talked-about body-melding sex scenes between real-life lovers Anna Paquin and Stephen Moyer show that cable regularly goes where movies won't dare. Yes, we're talking about you, *Twilight*.

### Stripped Down

Marisa Tomei gyrates her way to an Academy Award nomination in *The Wrestler* (above), playing a single mom working the pole to pay the bills.

### Voulez-Vous Coucher Avec Moi Ce Soir?

Threesomes are all in a night's work for Billie Piper on the Brit TV series *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (left). By day she's a secretary; by night she's a high-ticket prostitute.



### Moody Blues

On Showtime's sexy *Californication* (lower left), novelist and sex junkie David Duchovny juggles an ex-girlfriend (Natascha McElhone) and a crippling case of writer's block.

### Necro Pornucopia

*Antichrist* (below left), from director Lars von Trier, freaked out audiences with scenes of Willem Dafoe and Charlotte Gainsbourg screwing on a pile of corpses.

### Rear Window

Cynthia Nixon's sweaty, candlelit lovemaking with old flame David Eigenberg helps justify the word sex in the title of the hugely popular *Sex and the City: The Movie* (below). Is it any surprise it's a transplant from cable?







### **Powder Powder**

Jessica Biel as a coke-addicted L.A. mother forced to strip for medical care for her ailing kid is the best thing about *Powder Blue* (above).



### **Killer Sex**

*Dexter: The Complete Third Season* (above right) gave viewers a ringside seat from which to observe the sexual hang-ups of TV's wittiest, most compelling serial killer.

### **Once Over Knightley**

Going topless in *The Edge of Love* (right), a World War II epic, was Keira Knightley's idea—another reason to love the Oscar-nominated actress.

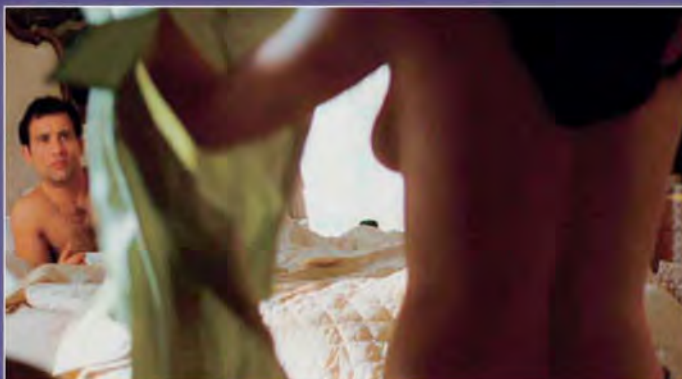


### **Cat and Mouse**

The serpentine plot twists of *Duplicity* (lower right) left limited screen time for the sexual tension between Julia Roberts and Clive Owen. Maybe the movie would have been a bigger hit if it featured more of that Roberts-Owen sizzle.

### **Choke on This**

*Choke* (below right), from the Chuck Palahniuk novel, features a raucous performance by Sam Rockwell as a sex-addicted con man who trolls for the kind of woman who brings sex toys to Sexaholics Anonymous meetings.



### **Burn, Baby, Burn**

*The Burning Plain* (below) features the amazing hotness of Charlize Theron, who scorches the screen as a troubled restaurant manager.





**PLAYBOY**  
PHILIPPINES

# Playmate Review

As PLAYBOY Philippines approaches its second anniversary, we have decided that it is time to partake of that most honored tradition of the PLAYBOY brand: the selection of the **PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR.**

Within these pages, you'll revisit the gorgeous women who have graced our monthly centerfolds.

They are the beautiful ambassadors of our esteemed brand: the women who proudly bear the title of Playmate of the Month.

We present to you the lovely ladies from our 2008 and 2009 issues.

Review, remember, and decide for yourself which of them best deserves our highest accolade.

Enjoy!



### Joy Pagurayan *Miss April 2008*

At first glance, one would think that Joy Pagurayan is just another pretty face sheltered from the harsh elements that the world can rain down on you. Nothing could be further from the truth. Joy, one of two Playmates for April 2008 has been around. She is an acting talent for both ABS-CBN and GMA7 and has appeared in fashion catalogues for D.E.I. and Celestina New York. She has also appeared as a model for San Miguel Corporation's anniversary, Samsung and Globe, along with fashion shoots for the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, *IN Thing* and the *Philippine Star*. With credentials such as these, it's no wonder she was chosen to be one of the Playmates for our maiden issue.



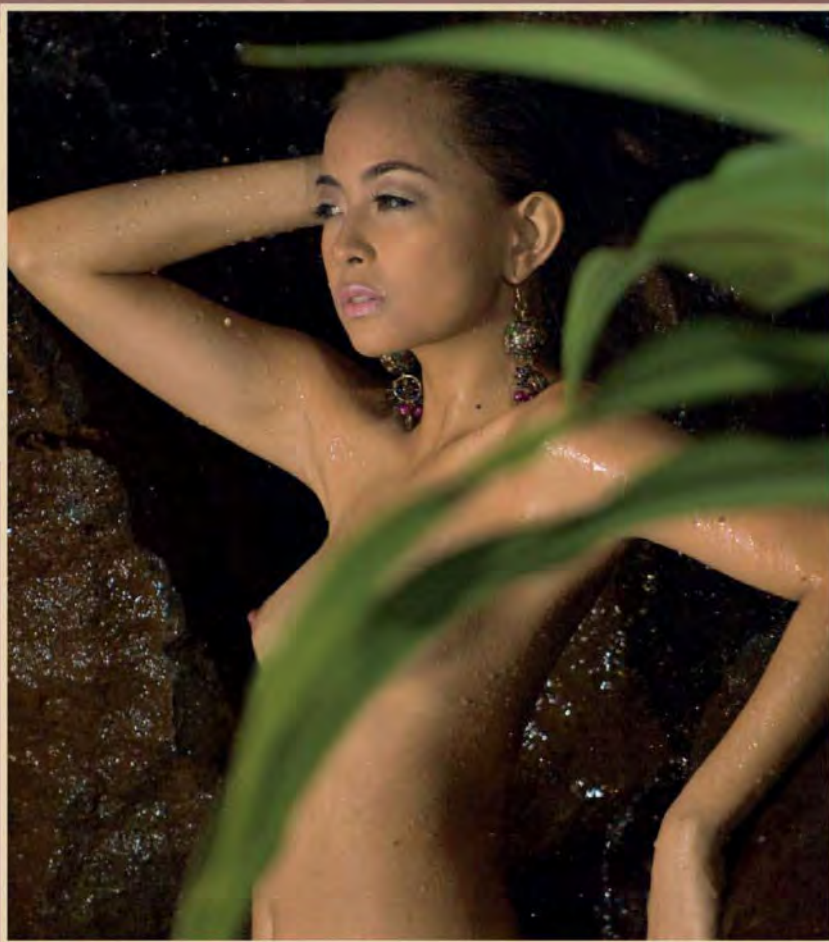
### Weng Santos *Miss April 2008*

Being first is always something noteworthy. Having two firsts is even better. Weng Santos, one of two Playmates for April 2008, was also PLAYBOY Philippines' first Playmate. This *Philippines' Next Top Model* finalist has done ramp modeling for Oxygen and was a L'Oreal model as well. She's also done some modeling work in Vietnam, among her many other accomplishments. But despite all these things, she's actually one of the nicest people you'll ever meet. Even though she's accomplished a lot of things, her feet remain firmly planted on the ground, which is why she was chosen to be one of the first of many centerfolds to grace our pages.



**Billy Ableda** *Miss May 2008*

Billy Ableda, who appeared in PLAYBOY in May 2008, loves chocolate milk and confesses to taking catnaps when time permits, especially during the lag times during events and pictorials. She's also an aspiring nurse, and yes, we are fully aware that women in uniform are always a turn on. What man wouldn't want a sexy nurse catering to all his needs? However, she might have a little trouble succeeding in this particular area of the medical profession, since her patients (the men, anyway) may not want to get better in the soonest possible time.



**Sachie Sanders** *Miss June 2008*

One-time Viva Hot Babe Sachie Sanders believes that love should always be true. She would like to someday be a successful singer but will settle for being a stylist in case her singing career doesn't take off. Personally, we wouldn't be worried much about her career not taking off. She's bound to skyrocket right to the top.







### April Lorraine Santos *Miss July 2008*

April, who hails from Puerto Princesa, is an aspiring model and actress, having appeared in numerous ads for clients like Modess and McDonald's. Aside from this, she's also a student taking up two majors: nursing and tourism. Her goal is to become a better person and to be appreciated for who she is. She loves texting, eating, watching movies, dancing and singing. With her tight schedule, we at PLAYBOY consider ourselves lucky that she took a breather from her insane work schedule to lounge around and pose for us.



### Geri Garcia *Miss August 2008*

August 2008's Playmate, Geri Garcia, is no stranger to the camera. Having been a model since she was six years old, her mother would always take her to different casting calls. This in turn honed and refined her modeling skills, as was clear from her pictures. She loves watching movies and says that she has a crush on movie siren Angelina Jolie. Even though she has more than ten years of experience in front of the camera, we're still begging for more.





### **Victoria Roc** *Miss September 2008*

Seldom do we see a perfect combination of beauty and personality. Victoria Roc, our Miss September 2008, is one such example. Born in Nueva Ecija, this looker likes trying out new things, especially in the kitchen, which usually yields gastronomically pleasant results. She wishes that men weren't too intimidated by her, but also wishes for people to know that just because she dresses sexily doesn't mean that she's an easy lay. This sexy nurse definitely has a lot on her mind.

### **Danica Hann** *Miss October 2008*

Danica Hann, our playmate for October 2008, is a Bulacan native. When asked why she loves it there so much, she answered that the air there is fresher and much more breathable than the smoke-filled smog of the city. A self-confessed Tom Cruise and Angelina Jolie fan, she loves shopping and playing Text Twist on her mobile phone, along with watching her favorite movies. This HRM major also hopes to one day quell her jalapeño-like temper and further develop her interpersonal skills. She never dreamed of being a model in her younger years but it is evident how much she enjoys being a Playmate as she enjoys the various travels and tours that come with being a PLAYBOY centerfold.





**Bridget Suarez** *Miss December 2008*

Just when you thought you had Bridget Suarez's personality down pat, she mixes it up and keeps you guessing again. This wonderful mix of enthralling inconsistencies says that if she were to be an alcoholic beverage, she would prefer to be tequila because it catches you off-guard. She also has a penchant for fruitcake and can eat a whole box by herself. She even asks for fruitcake as Christmas presents from her friends. With her offbeat charm, disarming good looks and fondness for fruitcake, how can you not love this girl?



**Joyce Castro** *Miss November 2008*

It is an old belief that men should run the business while the women should stay at home and make sure that she is always beautiful. Playmate Joyce Castro defies this outdated tradition by not only being a model, but also running her own business: her own spa and salon. This vision of beauty and business mogul swears that she can't live without her mobile phone, and that a Thai or Swedish massage will definitely melt your stress away. For us, her pictures alone do wonders.





**Michaela Grauke (Mia Gray)** *Miss January 2009*

Blessed with an adventurous streak and features to die for, it's no wonder that Michaela Grauke (Mia Gray), our German-born Playmate for January was once invited to the PLAYBOY Mansion. This daring she-devil loves action movies and would someday like to be a Bond Girl, citing Ursula Andress as her favorite. She was crowned Ms. Eurasia in 2008. She likes sushi and pasta but opts to eat sweets and chocolates during weekends.



**Jessie Medina** *Miss March 2009*

Gifted with an angelic face and a voluptuous body, PLAYBOY Philippines is lucky to have come across such beauty. Raised in a traditional family, Jessie's values have kept her head squarely on her shoulders, serving her well in the cutthroat world of professional modeling: "It's something that I can be totally proud of even after many years have passed," she says, with a beaming smile.





**Andrea Shin** *Miss April 2009*

When it comes to role models, this former *Deal or No Deal* 26K girl likes TV personality Kris Aquino, who, despite being one of the most powerful personalities in show business, was always nice to her during tapings for the show. She likes guys who can dance and guys who'll go the extra mile in terms of effort.



**Ruby Basco** *Miss April 2009*

Being a former 26K Girl herself, Ruby is quite the fire sprite. Within her petite frame is someone who can hold her liquor, opting to drink her alcohol straight up with no chaser. She may be small and slight, but we at PLAYBOY know that this girl is going to hit it big.



**Suan Javinez** *Miss May 2009*

This girl is a rock star. Suan is the type of girl who has no qualms about posing just about anywhere and everywhere. Suan is fun to work with, and seeing her have fun with a camera is a joy. When asked regarding how she's able to maintain a positive outlook, she was quoted as saying: "You only live once, right? You got to do all that you can do!" We couldn't have said it better ourselves.



**Aya Montez** *Miss June 2009*

This rock and roll princess is proof that one can be both beautiful and smart at the same time. A straight-A nursing student and part-time model possessed of delicate features, Aya surprised us when she told us of her musical aspirations. Having played rhythm guitar in three different bands, this girl's musical influences range from the Red Hot Chili Peppers to Soundgarden. Based on our happy experience working with her and the breathtaking pictorial she granted us, we think it's a safe bet that Miss June 2009 is one bookworm who's about to become very popular.





### **Jem Milton** *Miss July 2009*

Irony can be a funny thing. Jem Milton, who fulfills our schoolgirl fantasies, was a prankster while she was still in school. A soft-spoken and shy beauty, this down-to-earth woman is a wee bit traditional. She expects the guy to make the first move and strike up a conversation. This doesn't mean she's a snob, though. She's a caring and patient person. Once you find the courage to chat her up, you'll realize she's a charming, down-to-earth girl. But really now, with her unbearable cuteness and buxom body, what guy wouldn't want to chat her up?

### **Barbie San Miguel** *Miss August 2009*

PLAYBOY prides itself on bringing out the best in women. Miss August Barbie San Miguel is no exception. She admits to having been nervous at the beginning of the shoot: not only was it her first shoot for a magazine such as ours, but she also initially had no idea that celebrity Jim Paredes would be the one shooting her. "I loved working with Jim. He was so professional, and he really made things comfortable. It wasn't awkward at all!" This honor student and former Miss Pasay admits to covering up on normal days. "I'm usually quite conservative. I wear long-sleeved shirts to school," she says.





## Betina Acosta

*Miss October 2009*

This sweet Laguna native is a veteran model, and says that one of the perks of her job is being able to look beautiful and presentable: a big plus considering all her opportunities to meet new people. We at PLAYBOY value brains as much as we do looks, and Betina is no exception. She's got beauty, brains and an encompassing ambition to one day conquer the skies. With an innate sense of freedom, and independence from any influence when it comes to making decisions, how could you not love this girl?

## Nicole Belke

*Miss September 2009*

During Nicole's shoot, we weren't sure if having her pose with a Lamborghini would take away attention from our Ms. September. Automotive debates notwithstanding, this Playmate has excellent genes. Being half-Filipina and half-German, she was born in Kempten im Allgäu, in southwest Germany. Truth be told, we at PLAYBOY admit to feeling more than a bit foolish for considering that Nicole would be overshadowed by a Lamborghini. When the pictures look this good, we can't imagine anyone would mind being proven wrong.



## Phen Madrigal

*Miss December 2009*

A professional model, Phen has been doing events, fashion shows and product endorsements since she was 16. Her work has taken her all over Asia: Thailand, Singapore, Japan, Macau, Hong Kong and mainland China. You'd think that growing up in Baguio and Laoag would make her conservative and shy. But she's pretty confident and self-assured: so much so that her parents trust her to make her own decisions about her work. Phen is such a sweet, quiet girl, and if we had our way we'd keep her to ourselves. But being the Yuletide Playmate that she is, we'd be terribly selfish not to share her beauty with you.







# 20 QUESTIONS

PEQUE GALLAGA

BY MIKHAIL LECAROS • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSE R. DUMIRRIQUE

While *Oro, Plata, Mata* and *Scorpio Nights* would have been enough to secure his place in the annals of Philippine film history, Peque Gallaga is one of those rare directors who can lay claim to having made several critically-acclaimed films that went on to become blockbuster hits. We visited this icon of Philippine cinema at his Bacolod home for a no-holds barred chat on what it's like to be a self-proclaimed angry artist in the digital age.

## Q1

**PLAYBOY:** In your film career, you've been everything from production designer to actor to director. Which aspect of filmmaking do you most enjoy, do you still find excites you?

**GALLAGA:** Lately, it's the post-production side. Before, I used to love the actual shooting: it was like being a general and sending your troops out to battle and getting things done while having to work with increasingly decreasing time or money or light. Now, I find that the older I got, the more I enjoyed putting the films together (in post-production), to the point that I wish I could go through my old films and recut them. Another thing is that we never had good sound back then, and it's only lately that we've gotten the technology and the know-how to go into it, so I'd also love to go back and remix all my movies. So my answer now is post-production, but as I get even older, working on new scripts has suddenly become very pleasurable, even if many of them have very little hope of actually getting produced.

## Q2

**PLAYBOY:** Remastering is all well and good, but in re-cutting your films, wouldn't that remove the original intent from the source material, especially if it was successful to begin with?

**GALLAGA:** Of course, especially when it comes to archives or studying an artist at work, or how he works. The minute you change something, it changes the statement that the artist made at the time. But then, that's the artist throughout history: his work progresses. Look, we didn't have the equipment, especially for sound, at the time, and there was this line of thinking then that, since all the sound systems in all the theaters in the Philippines

were bad, we (filmmakers) would put everything up high, at full blast, because otherwise, the speakers wouldn't pick it up! Their woofers and their tweeters wouldn't work, so even if we had very good sound to begin with, it came out horrible!

I was a victim of the times. [laughs] I was just watching *Shake, Rattle and Roll* a few days ago, the *Manananggal* segment with Imma Alegre, and since that was a movie with three segments, we directors had to keep cutting and cutting to make our stories as short as possible, but now that I watch it, my God, I want to cut mine some more! What was the idiom then, the language then, it took some time for the action to start, but modern eyes see differently now, you have to cut faster. I now feel very dissatisfied with the pacing, with what was considered fast then. I was teaching film appreciation at St. Joseph's here in Bacolod, and it was a class of high school kids with no training whatsoever, and I showed them the shower sequence from *Psycho*. Their eyes were so quick, they were completely unimpressed: they could see that the knife never touched the body! With video games and everything, it just didn't work for them, but back then, wow, it was amazing!

That's why now, part of me wants to translate these old works of mine into the modern idiom, but of course, it's really an ego thing. [laughs] I mean, who wants to see those films again? Director's cuts here are unheard of; there's really no money for it. But what I did with *Oro (Oro, Plata, Mata)* at one point—I don't have the original negatives or masters, those are with ABS-CBN—since I had a U-matic copy from way back, what I did for my own amusement was, I digitized it and rescored it. Since I was able to play with it, I brought down the sounds to more or less separate the music from the dialogue, etc. etc., and now I pass it around to friends. The video quality isn't as good as what you'd see on Cinema One, but my sound quality's a lot better.



### Q3

**PLAYBOY:** Unlike some purists, you don't seem to have a contempt for technology. Why is that?

**GALLAGA:** No, I'm not uneasy at all, but I know my limitations. I've always thought of filmmaking as a collaborative process, so, since I've begun working with digital, I've brought people on board who are completely at home with it. However, I do give directorial apprenticeship workshops over the summer, and the first thing I do is say that we're not going to talk about technology whatsoever. We go back to film theory and narrative framework, because what I do have a contempt for now is directors who hide behind their technology. Normally, when you got filmmakers together in the past, they'd be talking about their stories and how to use cinema to expose something about character or psychology or motivations. Now, they sit down and talk about (affecting a young man's voice), "F63452 and HYY2P, you know *pare*, I was able to hold this, *nakapagshoot* ako."

This is like when the computer revolution happened 20 years ago. The high priests were all these computer-literate programmers, lording it over everyone else, but now, they're just in back rooms servicing computers. The sad thing is, this is something that's going to happen to many directors now, who are just completely, completely only concerned with the technology.

But of course, cinema has always been a marriage of art and technology. I mean, the very fact that you have to synch your sound with 24 frames per second shows that technology has been a concern from the very beginning, but with the best films, it was always very clear that the technology was at the service of the story. I'm not even talking about the art, because that's something that people come in with and declare after you've shot your piece, but now, more and more, it's technology first.

For example, I have a really great student, and he's very much into technology. He actually did a fantasy film project about a little kid that crosses a river into a supernatural world, complete with fantasy creatures in computer animation. My only criticism was that the whole thing... the *enkantos*, were all very Walt Disney. I had to tell him, "You're *Pinoy*, you should have a more *Pinoy* sensibility, your characters don't have to look like they came from a Disney or Dreamworks cartoon. Get beyond copying the technology and the language of Hollywood, and concentrate on your own ideas and concepts." Now, recently, he did a commercial for a restaurant, and the set up of the shots, the concepts were all amazing, but when it came to the food shots, they were out of focus! He told me that the food wasn't part of the story he'd written, but since it was a commercial, I told him that should have

been the only important thing! A lot of directors today, they get carried away, they don't think! They just want to play with the toys.

### Q4

**PLAYBOY:** Francis Ford Coppola once said that the lower the budget a film had, the greater its ambition could be. What's your take on that?

**GALLAGA:** Interesting. You know, maybe that's true in the States, because they have the money to play and they get spoiled, but here, because we are so

under-budgeted—always—that I can't even think of that statement ever applying to any of us. But I suppose, psychologically, it's true, like in child-rearing, kids with too many toys can't make decisions. It's usually the kids who take matchboxes and make them into cars, et cetera, that grow up into people who can bridge the crossing from Point A to Point B through creative process, so in that respect, I agree with Coppola. These days, kids are force-fed everything, their fantasies are already made up, they just need to load them up on their Gameboys and play them.

### Q5

**PLAYBOY:** Where do you see the local industry going?

**GALLAGA:** There's a big divide now between what I call corporate entertainment and the indie films. Corporate entertainment is what Star Cinema, GMA and Regal do. Any movie that has an executive committee cannot be creative. I don't care if they're my good friends directing, but when you have a committee above you, their only interest is product, and products are made to be packaged and sold. When you have that product, it's like Lucky Me, it's soup; it works, it's cheap, it has a lot of monosodium glutamate, so it touches all the bases that you need, but it's nothing that you'd serve your best friends for dinner.

Can you imagine, you're making a movie, and you have someone with a checklist: OK, *dapat magaway na sila dito...* check! *Dapat may sampalan...* check! *Mag-make-up sila or have a kissing scene...* check! *Dapat may kilig factor dito...* check! *Dapat mamatay ang nanay at this point...* check! It's predictable! So what happens is, now, our movies are enjoyed for the variations on the style. Everybody knows Claudine Baretto or Judy Ann or KC Concepcion is going to have a crying scene, a slapping scene, an alone scene; it just becomes a question of 'how are they going to do it?' As opposed to before, with 60's and 70's Regal, where Mother Lily had a corporate structure—she wanted to make money—but she would call in Elwood Perez and Joey Gosiengfiao [to direct]. So the way it would work was, the studio would say, "OK, you

“One of the best things that ever happened to me was after *Scorpio Nights* came out, Marilou Diaz-Abaya called me to give me her reading of the movie and I said, 'Okaaaaay... I didn't plan it that way, but it sounds good!'”



gotta have Alma Moreno, you gotta have Alfie Anido, but after that, *ikaw na bahala*." They let the artist take over.

A version of this happens in commercials now, companies decide who they want in their ads, and the ones making them aren't directors, they're just gofers. It's the same with photography in print ads, the client will come in with, say, a picture of a picnic they were on and say, "can you Photoshop this in as your background?" *Putang ina*, that's where my anger comes from now. Before, in advertising and in film, these people would come to the agency or the director, give them the concept and say, "Give me the answers, solve it for me. You're the expert." Now, they go to the director or the agency and say, "Do this for me."

Since now it's digital, you can shoot something 75 different ways. That's why very few directors today know how to direct a performance. A lot of directors now have an assistant director in charge of acting because they can't produce a performance! When you worked with Lino Brocka or Ishmael Bernal or Celso Ad. Castillo, they really knew how to pull a performance from their actors. The people now have absolutely no idea, they just keep doing it and doing it! They'll have a 'workshop' a day before their shoot, but it's not to see what the actors can do or to discover their potential and how far they can go, it's just a glorified rehearsal! If you're just rehearsing to shoot the next day, that's not a workshop; there's no creativity going on.

## Q6

**PLAYBOY:** What can you say about foreign impressions of the Philippines being based almost solely on the award-winning films of ours that they've seen?

**GALLAGA:** Yeah, I hate it. I hate it. Well, I'm an old man, so I'm angry about a lot of things. I talked earlier about corporate cinema and independent cinema, but a lot of independent directors like to show off how they're rebels and do "edgy" work, but all they're trying to do, where Mother Lily and Charo Santos are trying to please the *masa*, *sila naman*, they're trying to please the foreigners, the Europeans especially! I came out in a movie of Denisa Reyes and Mark Gary, *Hubad*, which was about middle class actors working in a play, and the Europeans didn't want to see it! They said, "This is middle class Philippines, but that doesn't exist, it's not real!" They wanted to see squatters, they wanted to see slums!

I hate this attitude, I really hate this, and a lot of our movies that are seen abroad now are doing the obligatory 'slum thing,' and this is the fault of the socialist mentality from the teachers in UP. Seriously! [gestures to interviewer] Are you from UP? It's the truth! They say art is not art unless it has "social relevance," but that's just not true! While art can be socially relevant, in local film, it has become the bible, through Lino Brocka, that it can only be socially relevant if you deal with what is apparently and obviously poor through the clichés of squatters, poverty, land exploitation, et cetera, et cetera. There is no art of joy, whimsy or silliness—it's not allowed! I'll have workshops where we concentrate on narrative, and when the UP kids go back to school, they're told, "Good story, but find the social connection."

But the social connection is interpreted by educators and academics who aren't artists. Look at the guy who wrote in the 1940's, Clifford Odets. He was the most popular playwright at the time because he was socialist, so his plays were always about things like oppression and strikes, but if you read his work now, it's boring, *passé*, *wala na*! Unlike Tennessee Williams, for example, who came out at around the same time, he talked about the human condition. Today, you have Cate Blanchett on stage doing *Streetcar Named Desire*, and no one's doing Clifford Odets anymore, and I think that's something like what will happen to a lot of the indie filmmakers now. It's not something new, it happened in painting, too, in the 1970's, even here in Negros. Here, people are much attuned to surrealism—but not the Dali kind—but when Cory took over and Nic Tiongson took over the CCP, it was institutionalized that you couldn't have art unless it was Filipino, and again, it was defined as bamboo shells, bones, feathers, *banigs*. All the paintings became *makibaka*, barbed wire, starving, et cetera. Art is being demanded and defined by the academics of UP, and if you don't go along with it, you're not crazy, you're just not Filipino. *Hindi ka Pinoy. Tangina mo! Puke mo! Fuck you!* [laughs]

I'm a UST dropout, hence my natural antipathy towards UP. As a 66-year-old artist working in the Philippines, the biggest stumbling block in cinema now is the film people who make the decisions, including the Urian (Film Awards). It's not even about a reaction to the foreign blockbusters that fill our theaters, this has been going on since Lino, because what worked for him became a template! I'm not saying that every UP graduate is like that, but they're forced to go through that needle, and it's stupid. A lot of the UP students I've taught or given workshops to ask if I can speak at UP, and I always tell them, "Anytime," but it never happens. I'm not allowed. I understood Nic Tiongson's mission, but you know, after a certain point, it's unfair to the real artists.

Historically, we had to go through the 'brownization' of the Filipinos because we were such '*amboys*,' that's true, but give me a break! Cinematically, I will always take Kurosawa and Fellini over Lamberto Avellana, and I don't care how much of a traitor that makes me. At a certain point, it's beyond Japanese and Italian: it's film, it's humanity. But since we never had that—we didn't even know Lamberto Avellana existed—we had to go through a very painful process where we said, "*Putang ina mo, may Lamberto Avellana, may Ateng Osorio*," we had to accept that. But that was in the 60's and 70's, *dapat tapos na yan*! Now, it's OK for a totally *Pinoy*, Tagalog-speaking guy to be able to admire Truffaut, but if you're *tisoy*, you're not allowed, because all of a sudden, you're a snob. This sounds like our private little pains, but it's not, it's actually affecting our movie-making. The choice of films being made, you know, it's like everyone should genuflect to those who make films about the horrors and agonies of Mindanao. Fuck it, if it's a boring film, it's boring! In the Philippines we have what I call—and I made this up a long time ago, but a lot of people are using it now—a 'cinema of intent.' If your movie's intention is to show the hardships, then it's good, it doesn't matter how bad the actual film is. Now everyone's going, "Oh my God, Lav Diaz is preparing a film called *Mindanao*," and it's already



a classic, because it's called *MINDANAO! Putang ina, hindi pa nga na-shoot*, it's a classic already?! People are taking off their shoes and facing Mecca because it's Lav Diaz's *MINDANAO! Putang ina*, at the end of the day, *kung boring, boring! Tapos!* It's always cinema of intent. We do the films for the festivals! We have the corporate movies for entertainment, and then we have these indie movies that no Pinoy watches. It's the same 300 people going to all the festivals, watching the same movies! *Eh, puta*, even the indie films now cost two million, two million five hundred thousand! You have no moral right to spend 2.5 million if less than a thousand people are going to see your film. If you do a painting or take a photograph, it won't cost 2.5 million, shoot away! Who was it who said, I think it was Samuel Goldwyn, "If you want to send a message, use Western Union." Art is not for messages.

## Q7

**PLAYBOY:** There are those who say that our colonial mentality is also the reason that, rather than confront the 'evils' of foreign influence, the best course of action is to shy away rather than facing it head on. The argument usually comes to us when it comes to the annual MMFF. Isn't that like an admission of inferiority?

**GALLAGA:** Yes, but I can understand that. To begin with, they're inferior because of the budget. It depends also on the kind of movie you're making. If you're doing a movie that has fantasy, that has action, there's no budget for that. At the time that Bruckheimer was crashing a plane into Las Vegas, Bong Revilla was blowing up one truck made of tin. How is that supposed to compare? It's support on the part of government as well, wherein they say, "We're going to back you up. Yes, we're inferior because of budget, but for these two weeks, we're just going to watch our movies." But even on that, we cheat, and our best intentions are corrupted.

## Q8

**PLAYBOY:** You mentioned earlier that you currently enjoy working on a number of scripts that have no hope of being produced. Can you give us a sample?

**GALLAGA:** Right now I'm working on a script now that's not mine, actually. It's by a Filipina living in San Francisco, and it's historical. It's about an American and a Filipina woman and a Filipino boy, based on historical elements. It's a melodrama, and there's a massacre and when you're finished with it, there's so much that it says about the Filipino character and what's important to us, and imperial America's coming here and deciding to teach, which is a more cruel way of imposing aggression than the sword. They force you to love them and be grateful. It's an amazing work, and she's trying to get money abroad to get it made. This would be for the international market for sure, but you see I prided myself that, as an artist, I went through my 'Regal phase.' I've done big hits, but even my big hits say something, have quirky ideas about the Philippine condition, et cetera, et cetera. No indie filmmaker has made a real hit yet, so *pinagyayabang ko yan*. Now, I don't give a shit, *tapos na ako*, eh. For example, when *Scorpio Nights 2* came up, I said, no, I don't want to do that again. I said I'd produce

it, let Erik Matti direct it, but I'd been there, done that, what else am I going to say about sex?

For example, Ray Gibraltar, who made *Wanted: Border* at Cinema One, he's from Iloilo, and I did some workshops in his town, we were teaching fishermen, and one of them won the Crystal Piyaya award here (in Bacolod) for one of his documentaries, and I said to him, "*Husto na nga, tama na yung relevance relevance!*" And since he's a horny bastard, I said, "I want to see your *Scorpio Nights*, I want to see you as an artist and as a Pinoy living in Iloilo. What is sex to you? What drives your motor?" And he was amused that he was being challenged that way, because a lot of people are being challenged *na pang-Cannes, pang-Vienna. Eh nakakapagod yung mga ganun*. I'm not going to watch a 12-hour movie, my doctor's advised against it, I only have ten years left to live, you know!

But you know, the stories are a lot better now. The ones I've enjoyed are *Jay*, *Big Time* and *Namets!*, but when what I'm watching is solemn, it turns me off, and I can't watch too long. Unfortunately, what happens is I can't watch a lot of the new releases because I'm here in Bacolod. I just got *Brutus*, I haven't seen it yet, and it's not any snobbery on my part, I just don't get a chance to see them, being away from Manila. It's always embarrassing for me, because people are always going to ask me what my favorite films are. Definitely, though, I would say, *Ang Pagdadalaga Ni Maximo Oliveros* is horrible, horrible! How can you have a movie about a gay boy who doesn't act gay? Cinema of intent. Out of two million people who could have acted that part, they got a kid who doesn't act gay!

## Q9

**PLAYBOY:** Speaking of *Scorpio Nights*, tell us about the gestation of that project. Was it produced with the specific intention to shock and awe?

**GALLAGA:** The truth was, I had a heart attack right before that. I had just done *Virgin Forest* and was doing a concert with Tessie Tomas and then another with Kuh Ledesma—I think it was the Kuh Ledesma one that gave me the heart attack—I was faced with not making another movie ever again. If you had a heart condition in those days, it was serious! A heart attack wasn't like now—I had a quintuple bypass five years ago, it's like an appendectomy now! Douglas Quijano came to say, "Hey, there's going to be this no-censorship policy in the ECP (Experimental Cinema of the Philippines), and Mother Lily wants to have a movie with frontal nudity and *bahala ka na kung may penetration or no penetration*, but we want big names in it. I got Anne Marie Gutierrez and Orestes Ojeda to say yes already, and they're willing to show frontal nudity." This was 1982 or 83.

In 1978, I saw a porno film called *V: The Hot One*, and it was beyond your ordinary porno where the guy shows up to clean the kitchen and they just fuck... this had good acting, *grabe!* There was this one scene in a skyscraper, they're on the 52nd floor, and they have sex from window to window, it wasn't just in and out, in and out, and I wanted to make something like that! I said I would do it—this was the only offer I had after my heart attack, and so I sat down with my collaborators and my art

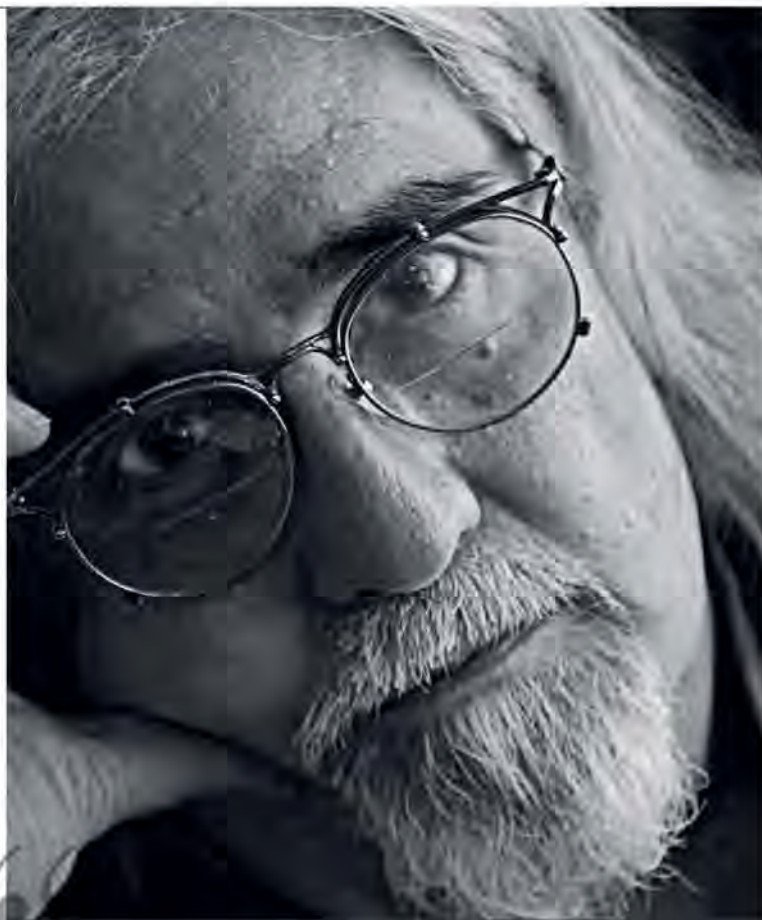


director told me about this small news article about a policeman who killed his wife because she was fucking their student boarder. I said that we shouldn't make it a policeman because it would give the character too much power, so we made him a security guard so he'd still have a gun.

So the movie was happening, we started working on it, and Don Escudero, the production designer realized that the way the story was going, we never had to step out of the building; it became a microcosm completely in and of itself. It stayed a porno, but then, the levels started to come in. We put in a family and built a whole soundtrack based on what music these people would be listening to at different hours of the day as the story was happening, and it was really, really interesting. At the same time, I really sat down and figured out that you can tell human psychology through human

behavior.... You can have a good scene with people eating, and just from the way they move, you know who they are and where they're coming from, and it's the same with bed behavior: the way they fuck, *kita mo talaga kung ano sila*. So we worked out with the actors the choreography, the way the hand would go in... brutal *talaga!* At the same time, we never had a scene where I'd go, "OK, you can just kiss her, *ikaw na bahala*." Walang "*ikaw na bahala*," every action had to have a motivation *talaga*. It's human behavior, never once was it just porn, even if I knew it (the movie) would never get away from those comparisons.

The backlash was totally, totally expected, but what's amazing was, I've had people approach me saying things like, "*Direk, napanuod ko yung Scorpio Nights, ganun talaga... chinuchupa niya ako, putangina nandun yung asawa niya, nagaway sila... yun ang the best, the danger of sex, et cetera, et cetera*." And, c'mon, I mean, a lot of people have come up to me and said that it's their sexual reference of how far they can play and how far they can go. In fact, the only scene in the whole of *Scorpio Nights* na purely *pang-kilig, pang-cinema* is the scene where



**Cinematically, I will always take Kurosawa and Fellini over Lamberto Avellana, and I don't care how much of a traitor that makes me. At a certain point, it's beyond Japanese and Italian: it's film, it's humanity.**

they're in the plastic raincoats in the rain; that scene has no motivation whatsoever, it just shows that he can't do without her and he's obsessed and addicted to sex and he goes back to her. *Talagang*, that was shot for *kilig, pang-jakol*, but everything else was always pushing the story forward.

## Q10

**PLAYBOY:** Do you find it ironic that your film, *Pinoy Blonde*, rather than being accepted as a send-up or a riff on Quentin Tarantino's movies, had most people miss the joke, with some even calling it a rip-off?

**GALLAGA:** Actually, I hated the fact that they thought I was trying to imitate Tarantino! "*Nagta-Tarantino si Gallaga...*" *putang ina*, I hate Tarantino, let's begin with that! I hate him, and that's the gag! Many people don't get the idea that the whole movie is

the movie in the lead's minds, with the point being that they're bad moviemakers! Tarantino copies from everyone and the recent one he did with Rodriguez—the worst movie maker in the world—*Grindhouse*... how could they make an homage to movies that were bad in the first place? How can you make a movie out of something that's bad and just gets worse? In the case of *Pinoy Blonde*, people totally missed the point because all their movies are so serious all the time, so solemn, *akala nila ganun din ako!* Everyone thought I was trying to be cool!

## Q11

**PLAYBOY:** You've worked with some of the biggest names in the Philippine film industry, yet in casting your recent film, *Agaton and Mindy*, you were quoted as saying that you purposely cast an unknown in the lead so as not to distract the audience. Is this something you consciously do with all your films?

**GALLAGA:** It's one of the reasons that I've never worked with Vilma Santos, for example. I've worked with Nora,



sure, but in comedies, never on dramatic movies. Their personality takes over and you end up having to serve the personality—which is pretty good for FPJ in a San Miguel commercial, where he projects “Fernando Poe-ness” and he’s so good at it—but in a movie, I don’t want to do that. For example, before I shot FPJ in the San Miguel ad, I had already done a San Miguel Beer ad because of *Oro Plata Mata*; it was the centennial, and they loved our production design, so we did that and it won in New York. I gave it a lot of *Oro* touches, like the boy leaving to be a revolutionary and the father stops him and blesses him, and San Miguel loved that because they’re always trying to promote the beer as a tradition. So they asked me if I could do the next FPJ piece. He was cast for the iconography, not just for the sake of casting, unlike now. Let me tell you, I’ve done three or four with FPJ, and the last one also had a centennial theme (the first three were set in different historical periods). It was going to be shot with FPJ at the Barasoain Church, and this old man, a revolutionary, is supposed to come and salute him, and FPJ refused to do it because, “*Putang ina, hindi naman ako matanda!*” but c’mon, he was old!

So my idea was, let’s get a young boy and do the salute, *pero ayaw rin ni FPJ* because it would make him look really old. So we were going to shoot it the next day, *wala pang* solution, so I said to him, “You know, Manager, we need something to put everything together. Since (in the first three ads) we had the revolutionary one, we had the World War II one, we had the land reform one... do you remember the last walk in *The Wild Bunch* where the heroes all walked in a row in slow motion? Let’s just do that, with a representative from each era - *ikaw nasa gitna* - shot at low angles, walking in slow motion.” And he said to me, “*Alam mo...* favorite *ko yung Wild Bunch*,” and he knew what it was about, so it was like, “OK!” *Wala nang saludo-saludo*, our actor was going after the sense of the scene, of the commercial, *hindi lang yung basta-basta*, like now... I hate it! My son and my daughter-in-law are in commercials now, so I know how they’re treating the artists.

## Q12

**PLAYBOY:** What do you think of the over-reading that sometimes occurs in film analysis? Isn’t it possible that sometimes a chair in a given shot could just be there, not because of some overall design, but because a PA just forgot to move it out of the way?

**GALLAGA:** That’s true, but that’s their (the critics’) job. That is the job of criticism, to really try and analyze. Frankly, there is so much a director does that just becomes subconscious, or even unconscious. One of the best things that ever happened to me was after *Scorpio Nights* came out, Marilou Diaz-Abaya called me up and said, “Hey, I want to congratulate you, what a great movie,” I said, “Yeah, you know what...,” and she said, “Shut up, shut up, I’ll tell you about your movie. Don’t talk!” And she told me her reading of the whole movie, and I said, “Okaaaay... I didn’t plan it [that way] but it sounds good! And the older I got, the more I thought to myself, maybe I did plan it! But you know, there is no real criticism in the Philippines, it’s always reviews; they don’t analyze, “Why this?” or “Why that?” and if they do, it’s always from a socialist—not even a social—context, which

is fine, but it’s so boring already! Enough! *Tama na!*

## Q13

**PLAYBOY:** What can you say about the democratization of the filmmaking process through technology?

**GALLAGA:** The problem with the world is that it’s too egalitarian, everybody is equal. But nobody is equal. Take *American Idol*, they don’t let the experts say who is the best, it’s *vox populi, vox dei*—the voice of the people is the voice of God—so they choose who is popular, not who is good. And this is what everybody’s doing now. It’s the dictatorship of the majority *talaga*. Majority rules and wins and you got to take the *masa* along with everything else. Now our indie filmmakers, they can’t get the popularity of the audience, so they get the popularity of Cannes, of the critics. We’re all jealous, and I really mean jealous, of Lav Diaz and Raymond Red, because any time they want money, they can get it—in dollars and Euros! They just give their... not even a sequence treatment, but just their intention, and boom, *nandyan na!* So now, that’s what everyone is working for. This mindset, it’s going to collapse. It’s already collapsing in the States... this whole scandal of people coming into Obama’s dinner, it’s reality TV! Anybody can be a “star” for the whole fifteen months, but people are going to want more [substance].

## Q14

**PLAYBOY:** Tell us about your childhood. What entertained you as a kid?

**GALLAGA:** A lot of fantasy. I would read a lot, I would draw and paint. I was in mortal dread all the time; our report cards were every two weeks, and I always had at least two failures, so I’d always give my report cards as late as possible. I’d spend my time in the bathroom, hiding from my father so that he wouldn’t ask me for my report cards. Inside the bathroom, I’d paint for hours, in water colors, these huge murals on the tiles and afterwards just wash them off. Of course, no one ever saw them.

My father was a military man: he was at Bataan and Corregidor, both. He raised us extremely strict, very conservative, very Catholic, and my parents would forever push the artistic uncle to me, and he would say, “Make art your avocation, not your vocation,” in a British accent and all. He wasn’t British, but he could do any accent, he was really good. So what happened was I used to paint, and he would buy my paintings, and the paintings he got were pretty good. The paintings I’ve got are really awful and horrible, but he would buy the good ones and pay me really big money for them, so I’d have money for all sorts of things.

What they didn’t know was that I lived a double life, a completely double life. I was a good boy, so I was always the class treasurer, and I would always steal money from the La Salle mission. Seriously! I would take Php1.40. Php1.20 was for a movie downtown—I would run away from class every Tuesday (that was mission collection day)—and 20 centavos was for the jeep going and coming back. I would watch movies the whole time [away from school]. This was grade school! So I was watching a lot of movies I wasn’t allowed to watch, like *Peeping*



Tom—that's a classic, and I never knew! I saw that at State Theater at Escolta, and it freaked the hell out of me. It was about movies, a voyeuristic thing, and I remember it completely. I saw *Rebel Without a Cause*. I was buying the ticket when I heard a big whistle that I thought was my father so I didn't enjoy the movie, I was just hiding in my seat during the whole thing. I didn't even hang out; I would just skip class, run there, take the jeep, watch the movie and run back. So yeah, the missions, instead of helping the pagans in Africa or whatever, gave me a cinematic education [laughs].

My parents never knew. They were afraid I was a dork, that I would never be able to stand on my own—they just didn't know! I wasn't even going to first class theaters, I was going to Time in Quiapo or whatever was available. I told my mom way after, when my dad had died already, and she was shocked.

I finished college here in Bacolod and our family was rewarded: they sent me to Spain, to Europe, so I took up a little bit of art there, before asking if I could take architecture. So I came back, I went to UST, did very well in my first sem, but in second sem, I never left my bed. This was before John Lennon did his bed-in—I stayed, for one whole semester in bed, I never left it. I don't know [why], there was no depression, I just stayed in bed. This guy there would come and say, "Hey, let's go to school," I'd say, "You go ahead, blah blah blah blah." And then, end of semester, my parents were going to find out that I hadn't attended any classes, so I applied at Ace Compton (before it became Ace Saatchi). They'd had a big walkout, so I was able to come in, and I told my parents that I didn't go to school because I was working—it was a lie!

## Q15

**PLAYBOY:** How did you make the transition from advertising to film?

**GALLAGA:** Through advertising, we got to learn very fast because we took over the agency after the big walkout, and it was around that time that I [first] picked up a camera. I'd been in Repertory. In fact, I got the same call from Cecile Guidote and Bibot Amador in the same day; one was starting Repertory, the other, PETA. But I knew Bibot and I didn't know Cecile, so I joined Repertory. In Repertory, I met this wonderful guy, an old gentleman, Allan Griffiths. We were together in the plays, and he was this old man, probably in his sixties back then, he introduced me to Jimi Hendrix, because his fans from England would send him records and he'd lend them to me. And he had this fabulous Canon 1218 Super 8 camera that looked like a bazooka. *Ganda*, you know, with the rubber and the 12 to one zoom ratio, at the time, which was, *grabe!* It cost 2,500 bucks. I went to him and I said, "Can I borrow Php 2,500?" and he did [lend it]! And you know, I was making like 700 pesos a

month at the time, but somehow I paid him! I got one, and I was teaching drama at the time, so what I would do was shoot my story boards with my actors from school, put in

some kind of music and tell the client, since I was creative head of the non-PNG accounts like Johnson & Johnson, Ovaltine, et cetera, et cetera: "The commercial will feel something like this." Of course, they'd never seen anything like that, and even if the music never synched up—it

was Super 8!—it worked!

After a while, I didn't want to do any more advertisements, I just wanted to shoot! We would make MTVs, and there were no MTVs at the time, they hadn't been invented yet! And this was right before *A Hard Day's Night*, and when we saw that movie, we said, "That's what we're doing!" And I had this very, very strong drama group in La Salle and we'd be shooting all of these films with a lot of music, et cetera, and one of the boys showed one to his parents one evening at some party, and the father asked him to get the guy who'd made it to come to his office so they could put it on TV! "Can you guys do this every week? Make a show, with music videos and whatever?" So we did, and I didn't know anything about TV, nothing! I didn't even know there was a control room, et cetera, but luckily, my partner was Butch Perez at the time, and he said he'd take care of the camera, et cetera, while I took care of directing. The show we made, *The Fabulous Gamboas*, it was like *Laugh In*, with lots of gags, but no editing, we had to do ten minutes at a time before cutting. If we made a mistake, we took it from the top! By that time, we were shooting on 16mm, and we didn't have any money, so we would edit on the negative and had to train our eyes to see in reverse before showing the films at the last minute, finally reversed to the proper colors. My God, it was thirteen weeks of no sleeping at all, we did a whole season.

From there, a friend of mine asked me to direct her musical show, and little by little, I got into TV, learned TV, and I graduated to Rosemarie Sonora, doing her anthology show, at which point, Ateng Osorio—one of the first women directors in the Philippines—who was then scriptwriter of the Rosemarie show, kind of adopted me and said, "Listen, I'll do any story you want, but I'll cast one person every week. Every week, I cast one person." I said OK, and she'd always cast a classic star; she was educating me, showing me Philippine film history through her casting! Fred Montilla, Mary Walter—who I got to know well—I was working with the likes of Amado Cortez, and all those people who she would bring in one at a time. From there, I directed Rosemary's movie... I kept moving into things I had absolutely no idea about! Advertising? Never! TV? Never! That's why I got into drug problems because I was always taking uppers just to compensate. Totally, totally bluffing all the way, just lying!

## Q16

**PLAYBOY:** What made you stop doing drugs?



**GALLAGA:** At a certain point, Martial Law had just been declared, after the first movie Butch Perez and I made, *Binhi*, my wife and I went to Baguio, and I was suicidal. What was scary was that I had stopped being afraid of suicide, that became really scary. I told my wife that I had to stop, I could just teach on the side, but she thought the academe wouldn't take me, I had long hair and all that. And so, I came back to Bacolod and we began all over again. I was teaching acting and I was bluffing, I didn't even know what I was saying! There were no books on acting, but because of Repertory, a guy from Australia came over and he gave a workshop. We had done a show for Coca-Cola, and I was the Coca-Cola salesman (I used to be thin and *pogi* before), so we had these workshops and oh my God, they worked!

I remember I visited Butch in Baguio one time and I saw this book in the John Hay library, *Viola Spolin's Improvisations For The Theater*, and I borrowed it. I started reading, and my God, step by step, I did the acting exercises from A to Z. I stole the book and brought it to Bacolod with me and started using it to teach my classes here. While teaching, I learned it. So yeah, I stole a book while I was sobering up and I've been teaching it ever since, then I started adding a few things and creating my own exercises and I started to understand what I was doing. But that original book became the bible of so many people! I still have the book, and as a matter of fact, I bought the new edition [laughs]. But I'm a terrible actor. I can't cry on cue, but my students can!

## Q17

**PLAYBOY:** We've heard you have problems memorizing lines these days because of the drugs you used to take, but people keep getting you for acting roles. What are the stranger places you've had to hide your cue cards?

**GALLAGA:** Yeah, because of the drugs. The ham in Jose Rizal was one, I was eating that thing and reading the lines under it! That asshole Mario O' Hara—I say asshole out of friendship, he's a great guy—he's cast me twice and I always tell him, "*Putang ina naman, Mario, i-cut-to-cut mo naman, wag tuloy-tuloy.*" In *Tatlong Taon Walang Diyos*, he fucked me *talaga*, I had this whole monologue! But lucky, I had a week where I wasn't doing anything, and I memorized it phonetically, like when Toshiro Mifune started making American movies, I didn't even know what I was saying! *Putang ina niya*, he never cut away (during) the whole thing! Another time we were doing this thing on San Lorenzo Ruiz and again I had this



Peque Gallaga, (left), with Brillante Mendoza (right), hard at work during production of *Virgin Forest*. (Photography by Uro Dela Cruz)

long, long spiel, but luckily we shot it in San Agustin, where there were a lot of corners and statues; I figured out his camera angles and after he gave me the blocking, every *santo* in the place had my cue cards taped to them [laughs]. Oh, and I had directed *Fiddler on the Roof* in Manila, so we did a really huge production of it here in Bacolod with 120 cast members and a full-scale village. Now, my brother's a terrific actor, and I'd directed

him in Manila, so I was directing him again. He was taking his medicine finals in Manila then, but I said, "It's OK, this guy knows what he's doing," until the last minute, when he told me that he couldn't make it. I had to take over, and because we had done it so many times, the lines came to me easy, but the songs didn't—we had to paint the entire lyrics on the floors and the ceilings of the set!

## Q18

**PLAYBOY:** You do a lot of acting and directing workshops these days. How do you approach teaching film to a fresh class?

**GALLAGA:** I show *Psycho* as an exercise in telling a story through movies, which is something they don't understand, which is a very Hitchcock-ian thing. It's a mindfuck: how do you kill Janet Leigh? If you can kill her, then everyone is vulnerable. I also like to show how time is suspended in film, with movies like *Memento*, *Timecode* and *Run Lola Run*. The techies really love *Timecode*, where everybody's shooting at the same time, moving their cameras at the same time, and you have special effects, with blood and a squib and everything at the same time, at the right time, from different points of view, *grabe!*

Now, I have no academic background whatsoever, so I always feel insecure teaching anything. I don't know the pedagogy, I don't know steps one, two, three, four, but what I'm good at, what I do is—and this is why I don't usually teach more than 12 people per class—I get to know them as fast as I can and I deal with their artistic process. I bring each one to deal with a cinematic problem. What I'm teaching is how to be an artist, more than anything else, I don't teach cinema. It becomes very intense, very personal, and in a way, I'm using films to show how artists solve a particular problem, or do not solve a particular problem, like Coppola, for me, one of the top films ever is *Apocalypse Now*, but it's a failure.

## Q19

**PLAYBOY:** It may have been a bit over-indulgent at times, but it's hard to imagine *Apocalypse Now* as a failure. What



do you mean?

**GALLAGA:** When it's overindulgent like that, I say give me more! Oh man, I could watch it over and over and give a running commentary, but at the end, when it's, "The horror, the horror," I don't think he solved the horror. Well, of course, Marlon Brando really let Coppola down—he never read the book—he was an asshole! What's more interesting is the horror he, Coppola, went through making the film. When I saw [*Apocalypse Now* documentary] *Hearts of Darkness*, that just made it worse. I mean, it's just so hard to verbalize just what horror is, since in the novel you can just suggest it, but in a movie, you have to show it—you really have to show just what the fuck the horror is.

I can wax poetic on *Apocalypse Now* because I had a little part behind-the-scenes. What happened was that Butch Perez and Laida (Lim-Perez)—who was my partner later on when I did *Ganito Kami Noon... Paano Kayo Ngayon?* as production designer—we had no idea what production design was, no Filipino did, because it died with World War II. When the war happened, the things they cut down on in Filipino movies were sound and production design. So you had movies with little props to show it was war time, but *wala na mga* fancy sets, et cetera. And then, Laida calls me up one day and says, "Hey, come and take a look at what we're doing," she was working for (*Apocalypse Now* Production Designer) Dean Tavoularis, and so was Butch, they were in a department! For us, who'd never really done production design in our lives, real production design, it was amazing! Imagine, one year before that, they had people planting rice fields so that they would be ready when it was time to shoot! They even had one department that was all UP students looking for 1960's trash, old bottles, et cetera, et cetera.

I was there on and off the year they were shooting, not really doing anything, just watching. The most fantastic thing I'd ever seen was, we'd go to the location of the camp and everyone was there, the Ifugaos were there, everybody was in costume, blood-soaked, et cetera, et cetera, one whole bank of HMI's\* just on the mountain, not even on the set, just to light the background! Everything was there, and there was Coppola, fat, drinking a Sprite, and he turns around, talks to two guys who in turn talk to five interpreters, Cambodian, Lao, Vietnamese, Pinoy and Italian (for the Italian crew) who then start talking to the actors and staff all at the same time. And then, bam! The rain sprinkler starts, five to seven hoses start spraying, the Ifugaos start dancing, soldiers are throwing bodies into a pit and the fire goes up, completely in control, and I look up and I see the camera is on a close-up of Martin Sheen, who's tied up. Why were they doing this? Because production design is creating reality for the actor. The second we heard, "CUT!" this whole bank of Americans came with wool blankets to

put around each actor, everyone who was in the scene. I was a convert, I'd found God! That's what I wanted to do the rest of my life! Yeah, *Apocalypse Now* really changed my life. I'd directed one film and a lot of TV, but this was like going from Montessori to a doctorate, it was unbelievable!

**I kept moving into things I had absolutely no idea about! Advertising? Never! TV? Never! That's why I got into drug problems, I was always taking uppers just to compensate. Totally, totally bluffing all the way, just lying!**

We (Butch Perez and I) actually had lunch with Coppola and Virgie Moreno, I remember we were having gazpacho. Coppola was in a bad place, well into his horror. He was already full of himself, and he was complaining to us about how difficult it was to shoot in a jungle, so Butch

said, "You know, Francis..."—*Ako nga*, "Mr. Coppola, Mr. Coppola," *si* Butch, "Francis!"—"You're *not* in a jungle. You're in a coconut plantation. Coconuts will not grow in a jungle, if you have one coconut, it's not a jungle, and if you have many coconuts, you're in a plantation. There are roads going to your set, you are not in a jungle." Quiet *si* Coppola! *Ang yabang yabang niya*, but I don't blame him, when I got into movies, too, I would get so full of myself.

## Q20

**PLAYBOY:** What kind of movies do you have in your collection? What do you like to watch?

**GALLAGA:** Oh, I like a lot of classics, like *Seven Samurai* and all, but then you have something like *Shakespeare in Love*, delightful! A lot of Nicolas Roeg, *Walkabout*, *Don't Look Now*, *The Man Who Fell To Earth*. Of course, I watch recent fare, but the big change is that now, sex and violence have to be done really, really well, because I get so turned off now with screen sex. Even Hollywood, that used to do sex well, now you can see that it's all choreographed, eww! I'm past that, and gratuitous violence, also. You know what I just enjoyed recently? *The Namesake*. Wonderful, wonderful movie. One movie I always show in class is *The Squid and the Whale*, but I still believe a movie should have that "wow!" factor, like the first *Jurassic Park*... to see a dinosaur, breathing, the first time, amazing! Or the very first *Star Wars*, when the boy, Luke, goes out, he's brokenhearted, doesn't know what to do, he's on the farm, and there are two suns setting—the most romantic thing I've ever seen! Then came *The Empire Strikes Back*, and then that's it! The minute the Ewoks came in [*Return of the Jedi*]... fuck them! I enjoyed *Aliens*, that and the first one, *Alien*. I love when James Cameron is at his best, in terms of telling stories, he's really good. His best stories are always biblical! *Terminator* is the Annunciation, with the angel coming in to announce you're going to be the mother of God, or *The Abyss*, where he kills the girl to bring her to life again. *Ang galing talaga* when you're operating on that level (In *Titanic*, I loved the ship). But I've gotten into that rut, too. There's a certain point where you can't do any other movie because they want you to redo the stuff you've done and you end up doing it badly. How do you top yourself?



\* Editor's Note: Hydrargyrum Medium-Arc Iodide lights are used by directors of photography as an alternative to incandescent lights for their daylight-balanced output and power efficiency.



# MANHATTAN LOFT

THERE'S ARTISTRY IN RESIDENCE WITHIN  
HOTELIER-TO-THE-HOLLYWOOD-SET  
JASON POMERANC'S BACHELOR SPREAD IN  
DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN

BY STEVE GARBARINO  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES IMBROGNO







Jason Pomeranc has been called “the designer hotelier into the latest thinking-person’s sex symbol.” His hotels—the Hollywood Roosevelt and Thompson Beverly Hills in LA and New York’s Thompson Lower East Side and the recently opened Smyth among them—are known for their celebrity and rock-star clientele: Brad and Angelina, Prince and Lenny, Lindsay Lohan, et al. (Prince loved the Roosevelt so much he transformed the penthouse into his own vanity suite replete with murals of his visage.

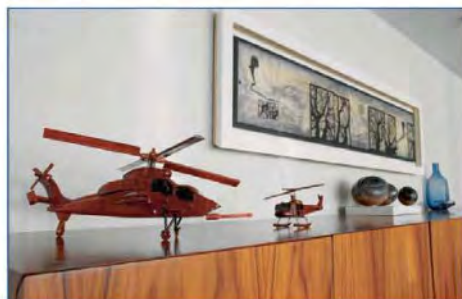
Courtney Love, less flatteringly, passed out near the David Hockney-painted pool and exited by ambulance.) Pomeranc’s curatorial abilities have given each of his hotels a personality of its own.

So, when the hotelier, 38, moved into his fine-boned contemporary downtown New York apartment six years ago, he decided it was time, as he says, “to evolve”: “I wanted to remove myself from this vacuum of having a personal ‘guy’ space, that whole fraternity-house mentality of male living.” His home—a 3,000-square-foot loft in





**Above:** The dining area is likely to be empty during daylight hours. Most of the action in Pomeranc's life happens after dark. The Prouve table is made of Brazilian rosewood with signature flared legs. When the seats are filled it's usually with guests whose names one recognizes. At his informal Oscars party Pomeranc hosted much of the cast of *Gossip Girl*. He had it catered with knishes and pastrami sandwiches courtesy of the one and only Katz's Deli.







SoHo, as airy as a gallery, with 12-foot-high ceilings and stainless-steel elevator doors opening directly into the living area—fit the bill for his new bachelor pad. The fourth-floor space was once the gallery of Leo Caastelli, the fabled art dealer, who in the 1960s and 1970s, handled such pop art ists such as Roy Lichtenstein and Robert Rauschenberg. Like Pomeranc's hotels—which all feature specific photographers' works, from Steven Klein (Thompson Beverly Hills) and Guy Bourdain (Six Columbus) to John Sparagana (Smyth)—the space is about “anonymity and escapism,” says Pomeranc. “While there are some elements that are overtly sexual,” he says, “it’s not just about sex; it’s about mental escape.” His home is an extension of his hotels. Baggage is checked at the door.

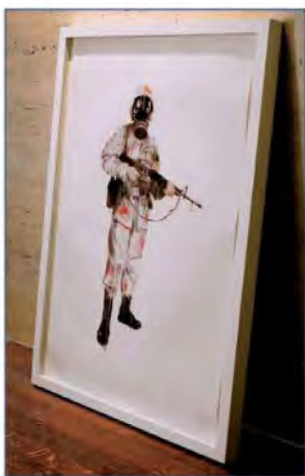


As Pomeranc puts it in the first line of his Thompson Hotel Group manifesto, “In a world full of choices, we all need to question who we are and where we belong.” Everything in his loft is an expression of who he is and where he belongs. **Above:** The onyx fireplace, framed in python print, is next to an inset firewood box. **Left:** A piece called *I Marvel the Flames Do Not Wake You*, by artist Rob Wynne, hangs in the main space opposite the dining table and windows, which allow light to flood in by day. The artwork is the hotelier's current favorite. “It’s a little foreboding to a lot of people,” he says of the piece, laughing. “I think it’s a statement to any woman who comes in here. Still, I think the apartment is very inviting.”



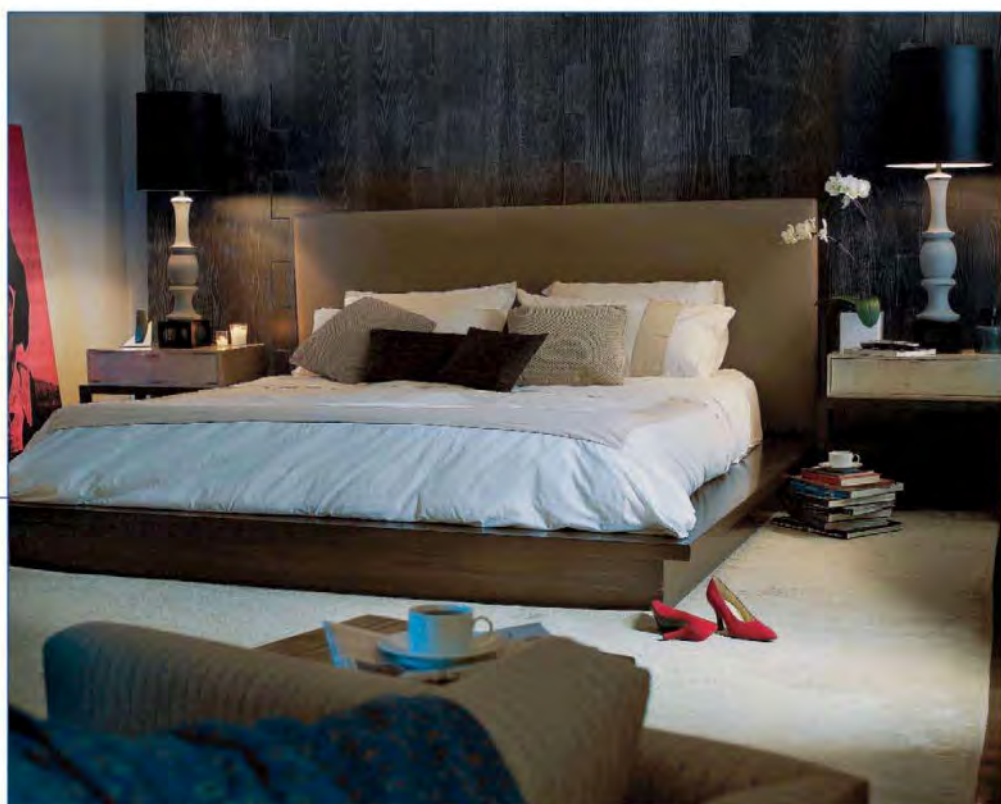


**Above:** The airy stainless-steel kitchen with chopping island caters to a party scene. "When cooking does happen in here, it's more of a collaborative experience," says Pomeranc. "The kitchen is an extension of the social space of the loft." The real cooking occurs in the restaurants in Pomeranc's hotels, revered Los Angeles and New York spots like BondSt, Blue Ribbon and Shang. **Right:** The pop-out custom teak bar was designed as a flight of jet-setting fancy. Its inspiration: "I wondered what it would look like if Dean Martin moved from a Palm Springs pad in the 1960s into a Manhattan loft," says Pomeranc, whose poison is Patron on the rocks with three limes, by the way. **Below:** The soldier drawing, by London-based artist Anthony Micallef, is another of Pomeranc's favorites. He keeps a small collection of incredibly detailed hand-carved helicopters on a long walnut console handcrafted in the Netherlands. "My helicopter collection was made by a Vietnam war-era sculptor," he says. "It's my arty version of a collection of toys a boy would maintain as he grew up." Everywhere the eye falls on this loft one finds a balance between thoughtfulness and simplicity; it's high-minded design that inspires one to seek adventure. Other art pieces include works by photographer Steven Klein (see the moody portrait of Brad and Angelina that hangs behind Pomeranc on the first page of this story) and artists Doug and Mike Starn.






"The master bedroom and bathroom allude to a hotel suite," says Pomeranc. "You feel you're at a distance from the rest of the apartment." The bedroom windows look out onto his 60 Thompson Hotel. **Below:** The Elvis portrait by Russel Young was appropriated from a photo taken at the White House during the infamous Nixon-Elvis meeting in 1970; the piece is part of the artist's "mug shot" series. **Below middle:** The painting is a party scene by Lisa Reuter. Says Pomeranc, "Evocative of a pop, Warhol-like palette, it's fun and colorful, yet there's a darkness to it. The figures look almost predatory." **Bottom:** Vik Muniz used chocolate syrup as paint in this portrait of Max Ernst and Peggy Guggenheim escaping the Nazis during World War II.







Since the Victorian era, modern audiences have come to relish vampire tales as stories of great passion, and the current fascination with all things vampiric is no different. In fact, at times it's hard to see the blood for all the sex simmering below the surface. These days one can argue that the hottest fantasies in pop culture almost always feature fangs.

# Lovebites

Vampire lovers  
turn fear  
into fantasy







By Leslie Klinger  
Photography by Szymon Brodziak  
Models: Weronika Zurkowska  
and Kasia Danysz

Many first-time readers of *Dracula* who come to it fresh from vampire movies are surprised to learn that the book describes Dracula as an old man with long fingernails, bushy eyebrows, white hair, a heavy moustache, hairy palms and bad breath—in short, not Bela Lugosi. Lugosi—and before him Raymond Huntley onstage in England—portrayed a different version of the Transylvanian count, one that has since informed most modern interpretations of bloodsucking fiends. First on Broadway and then in the 1931 Tod Browning-directed film, Lugosi transformed the vampire into a seductive creature dressed in tails and an opera cape, with glossy slicked-back hair and a distinguished manner. Although the notion of a nobleman preying on weak-willed women wasn't new to vampire stories, the walking corpse had changed to a man about town, a dangerous playboy who is a threat to the women he meets.

Subsequent portrayals—such as those by Christopher Lee (1958), Louis Jourdan (1977), Frank Langella (1979), Gary Oldman (1992) and Gerard Butler (2000)—cemented the public's view of Dracula as a charismatic, compelling and romantic figure. Jourdan and Langella seduce their victims, reserving physical attacks for their male opponents. Oldman's Dracula is shown having sex with one of his victims. Other vampire characters in films have been just as sexual. For example, Tom Cruise appeared in 1994 as Lestat, the Anne Rice-created rock-star vampire who preys only on evildoers. Lestat lives with a male adult vampire (played by Brad Pitt) and a five-year-old vampire girl (a very young Kirsten Dunst), simultaneously projecting homosexuality and pedophilia. William Marshall's dignified vampire in *Blacula* (1972) kills ruthlessly to protect his relationship with his reincarnated wife. Catherine Deneuve's Egyptian vampire in *The Hunger* (1983) has bisexual relationships with younger vampires. Lauren Hutton's vampire countess in the comedic *Once Bitten* (1985) gets it on with a young Jim Carrey, and David Boreanaz's Angel and James Marsters' Spike (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, 1997 to 2003, and *Angel*, 1999-2004)—soul-endowed vampires who fight bad vampires—each in turn falls prey to the charms of Buffy. CBS's *Moonlight* (2007-2008) and most recently HBO's *True Blood* (2008 to present) contrast the sexual relationships of a romantic, lonely gentleman vampire and beastlike rogue vampires.

All signs point to the hot fervor, last year's *Twilight* film notwithstanding. (Apparently vampires were getting too heavy for Mormon mom Stephenie Meyer, the author of the books behind the film franchise, who seemed to have deliberately set out to remove all sex from the vampire mythology and replaced it with lust-free—even blood-free—romantic love, making vampires safe for teens.) TV and film will continue to feature dangerous vampires, with *True Blood* renewed on HBO, *The Vampire Diaries* (described as *Twilight* with sex) on the CW and a sequel to Steve Niles's *30 Days of Night* in development. An official sequel to Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Darce Stoker and Ian Holt's *Dracula: The UnDead*, was published late last year. Given all this well-founded interest, can a film of Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan's shocking *Strain* trilogy be far behind?

Still the question remains: Why are people attracted to vampires? And if they existed, would they actually make good lovers? To answer the question, one must consider the facts. Technically, a vampire is a creature that ingests blood to exist. Nice ones skip humans and get by on animal or synthetic blood. Not-so-nice ones don't give a crap.









A secondary characteristic is that they're dead. Or undead, a term popularized in the 19th century (Stoker's *Dracula* was originally to be called *The Un-Dead*) to apply to vampires, zombies, mummies and their ilk, who find themselves in an embarrassing state between dead and alive. If you're undead, then you can't die, of course, except by very special means, and folklore has lots of suggestions for those. Also, according to folklore, vampires have superpowers (the strength of 20 men, shape-shifting abilities, telepathy, supersensitive hearing, etc.)

This seems to lend itself to hot sex. The catch, however, is that—according to that same folklore (and to one Dom Agustin Calmet, writing in the 18th century)—these undead are essentially soulless. While this may be helpful to criminals, IRS agents and real players, for most would-be lovers this poses a serious handicap toward building trust and mutual affection.

In the beginning vampires weren't all bad. They were merely a fact of life, like wolves or termites. According to the Greeks, the lamia, part of the triple goddess Hecate's entourage, were female creatures who seduced young men. Many of the victims appeared to have wholeheartedly enjoyed the experience. Philostratus, among others, wrote about Apollonius's encounter with one of these girls, who drinks his friend's blood or energy or life force—it's not quite clear—while having a very, very good time of it.

Only later did vampires get scary. In the 16th and 17th centuries people claimed numerous "official" sightings, often attested to by a cleric or military officer. Here's my version of a typical visitation: the village is having problems, maybe failing crops, weeks earlier. Maybe he's a vampire, says the lad. So he and his pals troop out to the graveyard to check on Uncle





George. Inside his coffin they find he has bloody lips, his nails and hair have grown out, his face is flushed, and groaning sounds are coming from his body. Now, having seen *CSI*, we know this is normal decomposition, the result of shrinking tissues and swelling gases. To the villagers, however, these are sure signs George has turned into a vampire. Fortunately, with the help of a cleric or military officer, they stick an iron or wooden stake through Uncle George's heart, stapling him to the coffin. For good measure they stick a brick into his jaws or cut off his head or stuff his mouth with garlic—or maybe all of the above. And sure enough, things get better in the village, validating the diagnosis.

In the first vampire tales written in English, by Mary Shelley's friend and Lord Byron's doctor, John Polidori (*The Vampyre*, 1819) and later by James Malcolm Rymer (*Varney the Vampyre*, 1847), the vampires are English nobles who resemble corpses. Lord Ruthven, the titular Vampyre, has a "dead gray eye" and a "deadly hue to his face." Sir Francis Varney is a "tall gaunt figure" with cadaverous features and long fingernails. However, they have a certain attraction about them—they are nobles, after all—and their victims are impressionable young girls and society ladies. The next great vampire tale, *Carmilla* (1872) by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, doesn't fit the mold. His vampire is a woman, the Countess Mircalla Karnstein, and the story centers around a transparently lesbian love affair.

When Abraham "Bram" Stoker's *Dracula* was published in 1897, critical reception was mixed. *The Daily Mail* called the book "powerful and horrible... The recollection of this weird and ghostly tale will doubtless haunt us for some time to come."







The literary arbiter *The Bookman* remarked, "A summary of the book would shock and disgust; but we must own that, though here and there in the course of the tale we hurried over things with repulsion, we read nearly the whole thing with rapt attention."

The book quickly found an audience among sensation seekers, and over time it became so popular that sales were said to surpass those of the Bible (an erroneous assertion, as it turns out). *Dracula* offered the Victorian reader steamy scenes reeking of sex and sexual tension while avoiding the outright pornographic approach of works like *Autobiography of a Flea* or *The Romance of Lust*. In 1959 British critic Maurice Richardson termed *Dracula* "a kind of incestuous, necrophilious, oral-anal-sadistic, all-in wrestling match." Later vampire scholar James Twitchell called the action "sex without genitalia, sex without confusion, sex without responsibility, sex without guilt, sex

without love—better yet, sex without mention."

Whether cast in the modern romantic image or as the old, well-bred monster, the vampire always seduces, coerces, hypnotizes and compels his or her victims to succumb to the vampire's needs. For example, in *Dracula*, Lucy Westenra is first bitten on a bench in the moonlight and then nearly drained of blood during repeated visits to her bedroom by the vampire count. Victorian readers would not have missed the point when poor Lucy is saved from becoming a vampire by the insertion of a large wooden stake into her body by her noble fiancé. As the young solicitor Jonathan Harker admits he is attacked by three female vampires, "There was something about them... some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. It is not good to note this down, lest some day it should meet [Harker's fiancée,







later wife] Mina's eyes." Carmilla, mentioned earlier, has long drawn-out scenes of the titular female vampire lovingly nursing a younger woman, who slowly realizes her caring older companion is actually the cause of her blood loss.

Later in *Dracula*, Mina has her own weak moment. The count engages in what can only be seen as a form of oral sex with her while Harker lies in a faint on the neighboring bed. Mina, forced to explain herself to Harker and friends, confesses, "I was bewildered, and strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him. I suppose it is a part of the horrible curse that such is, when his touch is on his victim." Varney's victim suffers much the same fate: "Her bosom heaves, and her limbs tremble, yet she cannot withdraw her eyes from that marble-looking face." How convenient for these victims that they cannot resist. "The devil made me do it" or "I couldn't help myself" have always been useful excuses for indulging in illicit passions.

But do vampire-mortal connections involve sex? Or love? Or just blood drinking? When one reads the literature carefully, it is sometimes hard to tell. Some bodily fluids are certainly exchanged. Varney explicitly records gushes of blood, and the Vampyre's encounters aren't much less animalistic. But as vampire tales mature, the blood becomes less obvious. Fred Saberhagen points out in his novel *The Dracula Tape* that *Dracula* contains not a single scene in which we actually see Dracula drinking blood. While that may be literally true, when Dracula calls Mina his "bountiful winepress," it hardly suggests a chaste relationship. The romantic 1978 BBC production of *Dracula* captures the love-blood ambiguity perfectly with a scene in which Dracula explains to Mina that human kissing originated as a substitute for nourishment.







What about love? Dracula's female companions accuse him of never loving, but he retorts, "Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past. Is it not so?" Certainly countless other writers imagined vampires in love, from the characters in *Camilla* and Chelsea Quinn Yabro's fine *Le Comte de Saint-Germain* novels, to Buffy and Angel (or Buffy and Spike—she got around) and Charlaine Harris's Sookie Stackhouse and Bill Compton, as well as virtually every post-1931 screen Dracula (well, maybe not the Christopher Lee films). Anne Rice's Lestat has incestuous feelings about his mother and loves a handful of other women, as well as several of his male friends, over the course of a long life.

The attraction of a vampire lover appears simple. Vampires, as the stories go, are incredibly needy and can't exist without at least one human food source. This need offers potential partners an opportunity for a fulfilling relationship. It's perfectly clear to these people that their vampire lover can't live without them and in fact depends on their willingness to be intimate and provide nourishment. And what more could one ask for in a lover than someone who lives forever, never becomes sick or old, has to stay home during the day and is always ready for action at night?

For others the appeal lies in the possibility that a vampire lover can be reformed, made into someone who doesn't bite. The powerful attraction of this idea is clear in various vampire stories. Mina has this hope for poor Count Dracula and rejoices when she sees "a look of peace" on his face in death. Film after revisionist film of Dracula lets us in on how he is not really a bad sort, in most cases just hung up on a woman. Anne Rice's vampires are filled with regret and longing for their lost mortal relationships, and both Angel and Spike struggle to be "good" vampires so they can pursue love with the human Buffy.

It's not surprising, then, that vampires have captured the attention, then, that vampires have captured the attention of some as love objects. The once monstrous creature has been transformed in books and film into one with great possibilities as the ideal partner. Truly, for the vampire lover, love sucks.





## ROCK THE RABBIT 2009

What party would be complete without music? Music is the lifeblood and oxygen of today's modern society and we here at PLAYBOY (especially the editorial team) appreciate the effort music has given in keeping us all sane. In this vein, we decided to venerate the music in our lives by presenting the latest leg of our ROCK THE RABBIT concert series. Among the bands and artists featured were Razorback, Sinosikat? and 6cyclemind, among others. Sponsoring the event were Bitoy's, Odyssey Music & Video, Budweiser, 4U2, RJUR 105.9, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, 103.5 Max FM, 99.5RT, JAM 88.3 and 91.5 Energy FM. And of course, what PLAYBOY event would be complete without the presence of our ever-so-lovely PLAYBOY Bunnies, who were on hand to give ROCK THE RABBIT the PLAYBOY touch, along with our Playmates from previous issues to promote the PLAYBOY lifestyle and spread some early holiday cheer.







Photos by: Team Nikon Bullies



# Playboy News

## EDITORIAL UPDATE



Managing Editor Mikhail Lecaros and Features Correspondent Regina Layug attended the *Ninja Assassin* premiere held by media partner Warner Bros. at Gateway Mall. With them in this shot is Warner Bros. Marketing Director Sionee Lagman.



Art Director **Dominic Calalo** chatted up December cover girl **Jacq Yu** when she stopped by the PLAYBOY office to check on her issue's proofs. Seen here is the final cover printing proof, just before we sent it to the printing press.

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, which was hardly the case for our **Editorial Assistant Marvin Covar**, seen here on September 21 shortly after having won his second bout as an amateur boxer, for a record of 2-0.



PLAYBOY was a media partner for the Advertising Board of the Philippines' golf tourney on November 18 at Subic's Mimosa Golf and Country Club, where our Bunnies helped present awards to the top golfers of the day.

# Playboy News

## Street Code at Metrowalk

PLAYBOY was in attendance as an event partner of the Street Code Car Show/Fashion Show/Street Party event at Metrowalk on December 12. PLAYBOY Bunny **Laine** and December Playmate **Phen Madrigal** presented awards during the event program, and posed for photos with eager magazine fans and the remarkable cars on display. Our thanks go to the organizers for the opportunity to share in the festivities! Special thanks too to **Brian Mirasol** and **Alberico 'Bok' Umali** for the photo coverage!

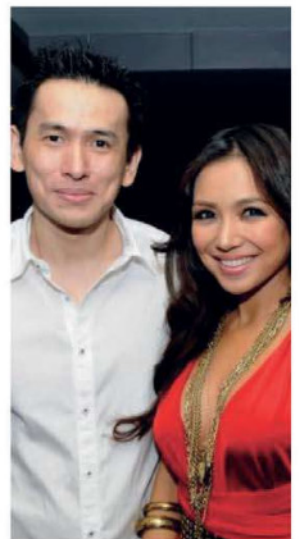




# Playboy News

## Z-Bar December Issue Launch

Z-bar along Connecticut Avenue was host to the launch party where cover girl Jacq Yu and Playmate of the Month Phen Madrigal unveiled their December issue. Good times and alcohol were free-flowing, as the event featured an unlimited open-bar supply of Jack Daniel's and promo girls floating around offering the people who attended free shots of The Bar, as the resident DJ spun tunes to go with the wild and crazy vibe that has been the trademark of our parties. Also on hand were our Playmates from previous issues along with our PLAYBOY Bunnies, who were there to add class and beauty to what already was one hell of a party. Special thanks to Richard Samson and Gummylicious, as well as to the photographers who covered the event for us: Jeff Saw, Alvin Ong and Liza Cruz.





# Playboy News

## Radio Tour

Jacq Yu and Playmate Phen Madrigal promoted the December issue with the month's radio tours to spread the PLAYBOY ideals of fun, beauty and love among the different radio stations across Metro Manila. Among the participating radio stations were Jam 88.3, Magic 89.9, and 99.5 RT whom we can't thank enough for letting PLAYBOY dominate the airwaves, even if for just a few brief moments.



## Where & How to Buy

Below is a list of retailers and manufacturers you can contact for information on where to find this month's featured merchandise.

### PLAYBOY Store

Australia - Melbourne  
447 Chapel St. So. Yarra  
Melbourne Australia, 3141  
Tel: 61-398276615  
Fax: 61-398279592  
Email: southyarra@playboyfashion.com.au  
Hong Kong  
Shop C1-C2  
Hamilton Mansion  
1-3 Cleveland St.  
Causeway Bay, Hong Kong  
Tel: 852-2576-0377

Thailand - Bangkok  
Central World Plaza Mall,  
999/9 PLAYBOY Store,  
Unit# F206 - 2nd floor  
Praram 1 Rd. Khet Pratumnwan,

Kwang Patumwan, Bangkok,  
10330, Thailand  
Tel: 662-613-1023

United Kingdom  
153 Oxford Street  
London, W1D2JQ  
Tel: 44-020-7292-6080

USA - Las Vegas  
Caesar's Palace  
3500 Las Vegas Blvd. So. E-18B  
Las Vegas, NV 89109  
Tel: 702-851-7470

USA - Las Vegas  
The Palms, 4321 West Flamingo Road  
Las Vegas, NV 89103  
702-942-7777


### Velvet Rose

Robinsons Galleria  
3rd Level  
EDSA cor. Ortigas Ave., Pasig City Metro Manila  
Telephone: 683-0329

Shangri-la Plaza Mall  
3rd Level  
EDSA cor. Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City Metro Manila  
Telephone: 631-4323

SM Mall of Asia  
2nd Level, Main Mall  
Central Business Park, Bay Blvd., Bay City Pasay City  
Metro Manila  
Telephone: 556-0731





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